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“The House of the Temple”

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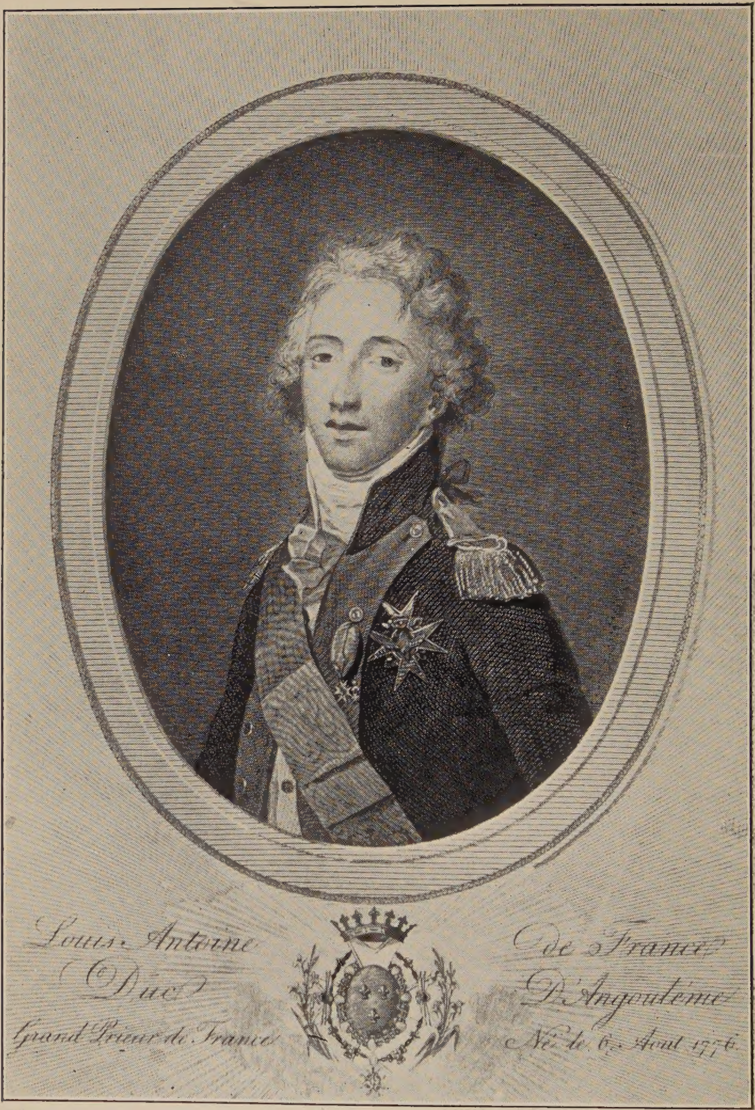
Louis Antoine
Duc
Grand Prieur de France
de France
D'Angoulême
Né le 6 Aout 1776.

Photo *British Museum*

LOUIS ANTOINE DE FRANCE, DUC D'ANGOULÊME

(GRAND PRIOR OF THE TEMPLE, 1776–1789)

Portrait engraved in London during the Emigration, showing the Cross of Malta displayed with Royal Arms.

Frontispiece

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"The House of the Temple"

A Study of

Malta and its Knights in the French Revolution

By

FREDERICK W. RYAN

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INTRODUCTION

THE Order of Malta, an aristocratic organization admitting into its governing ranks only persons enjoying the most exclusive qualifications of noble descent, and conducting its internal life, spiritual and material, on scientific feudal lines, undiluted by the democratic tendencies of the centuries, was the last stronghold of the ancient régime to fall before the French Revolution.

Yet in France it survived the States General, the Constituent Assembly and the Legislative Assembly—and it even enjoyed its sovereign independence during the first weeks of the National Convention. It was not until September 1792 that its property was confiscated, and not till the next year, 1793, in the peak of the Terror, that the persons of the Knights were proscribed. As a world-state it still held out for five years more, in its international stronghold of Malta, whither many French Knights had fled for refuge, and maintained a position of technical sovereign independence, and even of neutrality with France.

During this time, 1793–1798, a chargé d'affaires of its French interests remained a lonely figure in Paris, the clerk Cibon of whom much is here written. It was not until 1798, when the reaction of the Terror had come and the Directory was in power, that the historic Order was suddenly and dramatically broken up by the descent on Malta of General Bonaparte, acting on secret orders designed and presented by himself to the Directory—without a shot of effective resistance by the Knights in command of their famous fortress of Valletta, though they might easily have resisted the French invasion by force of arms.

How came it that this Order should have thus, to all seeming, so helplessly if not ingloriously fallen?

The answer is found partly in the mentality and policy of the French Knights in France, their imprudent zeal for the Royalist cause, and inability, despite wise counsels from Malta, to adapt themselves to the new orientation of men's minds in the Revolution; and partly to the development of modern civilization and custom which had been affecting all aristocracies and possessors of wealth and privilege and which reached its culmination in the Europe of the eighteenth century.

Two visible transformations may be observed in the life of the Order through the centuries. One, the physical development of their properties from the severe simplicity of their early dwellings, truly monastic, to the architectural magnificence and comfort of their palaces and villas of a later period; the other, the moral change from an austere religious rule and stern military discipline, no longer in consonance with the circumstances of the times, to a position in which it seemed natural for them to abandon some of the duties of both the religious and the lay state, and, if they willed, to pursue a life of luxury and ease.

In these influences the Knights of S. John, on their vast estates throughout Europe and in their Capital at Malta, shared the general experience, but, in their case, with a very notable difference. The remarkable thing to see is how, in spite of the relaxation of modern life and manners, especially in the highest society and in the Courts of the later eighteenth century, the institution of the Order did in fact preserve so much vigour in its organization and so much lofty character among its individual Knights. True, like the rest, it produced its voluptuaries and fops and intriguers and self-seekers as well as its hopeless reactionaries. But it was also producing, all the time and to the very end, men of heroic devotion to duty, of pious and simple private life and of the very highest grade of governing capacity. Its properties were administered with benevolence; its affairs of state and business were conducted methodically; its traditional philanthropic services were maintained in full competence. Its renowned Hospital at Malta, one of the wonders and glories of Europe, remained to the last a pioneer of the scientific spirit in medicine and surgery, often in advance of the times. Lecky points out that it was even then attempting on scientific lines the treatment and cure of the insane. Historians, men of science, men of research, scholars in every subject, as well as surgeons and physicians, were being trained in the class-rooms of the University and of the Hospital and were being fostered and encouraged by the enlightened patronage of the Grand Master and the Knights. Their beautiful Capital City had become a centre of culture as well as of social magnificence. The spirit that animated the Knights and the efficiency of their service as 'Hospitallers' had a brilliant illustration on the very eve of the Revolution in the manner in which they rushed with their aid to the victims of the terrible earthquake in Calabria and Sicily in 1783. The Knight Boisgelin's account of the incident is given in this book. When the distractions and horrors of the débâcle of Europe surrounded them, the bearing of the Knights, the arrogant temper displayed by so many of them, their deafness to more diplomatic counsels, were but qualities natural to a ruling caste confronting a time of cataclysmic violence. At the final crisis the want of a right man at the needed moment in the void left by the noble and great de Rohan, and the presence in charge of the situation of a wrong man, Hompesch, a weakling, to some a traitor, decided the catastrophe—the way wherein went many a doomed institution at that time.

In my endeavour to bring out all this and more that is relevant to the theme, I have to tell something of the early history of the Order and also of its state and government at Malta on the eve of the Revolution, and to give some account of the Temple in Paris, its origins and its buildings, and its last appearance as the Headquarters of the Grand Priory of France. In doing so, I am dealing with material which I have examined with an interest prompted by personal links with the Order and by residence in Malta. Some of it is the result of research amongst the archives of the Order at Malta, in Paris, London, and Dublin; much of it is not. It will be the fault of my presentation of this very fascinating story if the narrative, as set out, fails to interest.

* * *

The material relates not only to very striking events but to personalities influencing those events, in major or minor degree—strongly contrasted characters about whom much intimate human detail is available and who have hitherto not been given by students of history the attention which, perhaps, they deserve. The rough and quaint old Auvergnat de Bosredon Ransijat, Secretary of the Treasury, grappling with the financial problems of the time more effectively than Calonne or Necker; the skilful Ambassador in Paris, de Virieu; de Freslon, the military genius, nothing less, who so reorganised the Regiment of Malta, that under a bold Grand Master, Mediterranean history at that crisis might have been changed; the adventurous de Foresta bearding Robespierre; d'Estourmel, financing (from the funds of the Order) the flight to

Varennes, aided by his brother Knight, the gallant and unfortunate de Brillane, favourite of Marie Antoinette—another Fersen; Doublet, the bourgeois Secretary of the Grand Master at Malta, a strange and active personality; his opposite number in Paris, the other bourgeois, Cibon, holding staunchly to his post among Terrorists and Directors—these and others had a share in that history which needs appraisement.

Church and State in Malta

It remains to point out that the history of the Knights of Malta has a bearing on certain modern questions. One of these is the present political and ecclesiastical condition of Malta internally, together with the development among the Maltese people of an active racial and national consciousness. There is in question a conflict of authority between the Prime Minister and the Archbishop, and universal attention has been drawn to Malta recently by the fact that the Pope, appealed to by the British Government in London, has sent an Apostolic Delegate to the Island with a view to composing the dispute.

The outcome of this has been the proposal of a Concordat between the Vatican and the Government of Malta concerning certain religious institutions and the many powers and privileges which the Church, from of old, has enjoyed in the Islands.

Some of the seeds of this problem, and of the problem of Maltese nationalism, are to be found in incidents that occurred during the Grand Mastership of de Rohan's immediate predecessor, Ximenes. There was then a conflict of civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction between the Grand Master and the then Bishop, Pellerano, in which the Pope was appealed to, by the Grand Master, to intervene. The affair was complicated at the time by the discontent of the Maltese people with the rule of the Knights and the desire of some of them, reflecting popular movements elsewhere, for a national government; and it culminated, amid scenes of violence, in the appearance, as popular leader, of a priest, Don Gaetano Mannarino, who is revered by the Maltese as one of their martyrs and heroes. In the reign of Grand Master de Rohan, however, the relationship was placed on a more harmonious basis by Apostolic Letter of Pope Pius VI, of June 25, 1777, dealing with the matters in dispute.

Twenty-one years later, when the Knights were forced to leave the Islands and a French Government was in control, the situation became again unsettled and many problems in the relations of Church and State were carried forward to the nineteenth century to await solution under British rule, and some of these remain the vexed questions of to-day.

Acknowledgements

A list of some standard works consulted is appended, and another of the sources, in various archives, of most of the original letters and documents quoted.

As regards the Order of Malta in the eighteenth century I have drawn largely upon the contemporary Memoirs of Doublet, and I am glad to be able to say that Professor Holland Rose, in his correspondence with me, has confirmed my belief in the utility of introducing the 'French Secretary' to a wider circle of English readers.

I have found invaluable as a reference book upon the history and topography of Paris, *La Maison du Temple* of M. Henri Curzon, and I have to thank him for the plan of the Temple reproduced. Through the courtesy of MM. Firmin-Didot I have obtained the reproductions of the water-colour drawings by Hoffbauer of the Temple as it was in the years 1450 and 1770. The originals are in the Carnavalet Museum.

I have to thank a number of friends who have kindly assisted me in various ways: Sir E. Denison Ross, Sir Themistocles Zammit, for their criticisms of some of my conclusions; Mr. Joseph Darmanin Demajo, for certain information concerning the Archives of the Order of Malta; Mr. H. W. Fincham, for the active help he has given me when using the Library, which he so efficiently directs, of the Venerable Order of the Hospital of S. John of Jerusalem, at S. John's Gate, Clerkenwell.

I must, in particular, thank the Librarian of the Government Library in Valletta, the Chevalier Hannibal P. Scicluna, Knight of Grace of the Order of Malta, for undertaking to read the proofs of my book, and, as an historian of the Order, for giving me many times the benefit of his valuable advice on technical matters.

Notary Salvatore Cremona, Director of the Public Registry in Valletta, and his staff, by the facilities which they so courteously afford the public desirous of examining the

Archives in their custody, have made the reading of the records a light labour.

I am much indebted to Professor Owen J. Fogarty of the University of Malta, and to the Reverend Lambert McKenna, S.J., for their literary criticisms.

Lastly, it remains for me to thank my old friend, Mr. T. P. Gill, to whom I owe the appearance of this book in its present form. I had intended to complete a more elaborate and technical study of the subject, but yielding to his insistence I have attempted to present, in a somewhat lighter vein, this critical chapter in the history of Malta and its Knights.

FREDERICK W. RYAN.

VILLINO LEESON,
S. PAUL TA-TARGIA,
MALTA.

June 1930.

MEANING OF TERMS

MANY archaic words were used in the organisation of the Order to the end. It may be well to explain to the reader some of them used in this book.

COMMANDERY.—The smallest division of the property of the Order for the purpose of administration. In the house dwelt, following the 'Rule', the Knights, priests, and 'servants d'armes' of the Order, and their servants. It had its own chapel. Over this community and to manage this estate was placed a Knight, known as the Knight Commander. If it was endowed with lands, the local tenants paid rents to this Commander. The Grand Master appointed the Commander when necessity arose, subject to rule of seniority and good report of inspecting officers.

GRAND PRIORY.—A group of Commanderies under the authority of a Grand Prior. The Grand Prior usually resided in one of these Commanderies and this habitation consequently became also known as the Grand Priory. Here, in a Hall or Chapter House, he assembled periodically the Knights in his command, to receive his, or the Grand Master's orders, or to transact the business laid down in the Rule. Each Grand Prior was a member of the Chapter General which met in the Convent.

THE CONVENT.—The seat of the Central Government at Headquarters. According to an old definition it was 'the place where the Grand Master or his Lieutenant, the Church, the Infirmary, the Auberges or eight Langues are together'.

After the year 1530 the Convent was fixed at Malta.

LANGUES.—The Knights were divided according to their nationalities into Langues. There were eight Langues, viz.: Provence, Auvergne, France, Italy, Aragon, England, Germany and Castile.

AUBERGES.—The official residences of the Langues at Headquarters; from 1530 at Malta.

CARAVANS.—The compulsory naval or military training at Headquarters of a Knight before he was considered fully professed.

OTHER ANCIENT WORDS retained in the organisation were :— ‘ collect ’, the assembly of Knights of one nationality in their auberge ; ‘ disappropriation ’, the declaration by a brother of all his goods and effects ; ‘ spoglio ’, the property left at death by a Brother ; and ‘ responsions ’, ‘ mortuaries ’, and ‘ vacancies ’, certain contributions made annually or on occasion from the revenues of the local Commanderies to the Central Treasury of the Order.

PART I

The Order of S. John of Jerusalem: Before the Revolution in France

CHAPTER I
ORIGINS OF THE ORDER

First 'Master'—The Maltese People—Features of the Constitution of the Order—Ranks within the Order—The Making of a Knight—Costume—Keeping of Records

THE Order of S. John of Jerusalem originated in the year 1050 from a small hospital at Jerusalem, established for the benefit of way-worn Christian pilgrims or those exposed to the attacks of the infidel rulers of the Holy Land. This hospital, founded and maintained by the pious donations of some merchants of Amalfi in Italy, earned the good thanks of the pilgrims and the commendation of popes and kings, and with increasing wealth became a world-known institution.

It was dedicated at first to S. John the Almoner and afterwards to S. John the Baptist. Owing to its valuable services during the First Crusade, Papal sanction was obtained in 1098 for its elevation to the status of a monastic Order, the Brethren of the Hospital being placed in the first instance under the Rule of the Order of S. Benedict.

The first Rector of the Hospital at Jerusalem was one Gerard. Scala, a small village near Amalfi, claims to have been his Italian birthplace, likewise Sasso; but Provence also claims him as one of her sons. On his death the French Brethren received Gerard's body and brought it back with them from Jerusalem to Rhodes, whence, some four hundred years later, they carried it to the Church of the Baillage of Manosque, an important Commandery in Provence.[1]

Here it remained for some centuries, for we learn from the report of the Visitation of this church in the year 1754 that 'the body of Blessed Gerard, the Founder of our Order, is enclosed in a leaden coffin with a case, before which a lamp burns continually at the expense of the Lord Bailli . . . there is also another case in which is the head of Blessed Gerard in gold'.

In the year 1757, the relic of the Saint's head was translated from France to Malta, as a tribute to the Order. It was placed in the chapel of the Magistral Palace at Valletta.

---

[1] The year 1534 is mentioned in Titolo 1. Codice Gerosolimitano, 1783.

After the departure of the Knights from the Island in 1798, the Ursuline Nuns in Valletta, who followed the rule of the Order of S. John and wore the Maltese Cross on their habit, applied to the authorities for the privilege of keeping this relic, stating that they were the last ranks of the Order of S. John remaining in the Island. Their request was granted, and the relic was given to this community, in whose care it remains to-day.

First 'Master'

Blessed Gerard was content to call himself 'the humble rector of the hospital and guardian of Christ's poor'.

The title of 'Master' was first assumed by Raymond du Puy, elected in 1118.[1] It was under his régime that the influence and prestige of the Order increased. S. Bernard, who preached the Second Crusade, was his friend. The tradition of the sanctity and the earnestness of this Master was such that on his death his beatification was looked for and expected.

Du Puy, in an early, if not the first, Chapter General of the whole Order, issued 'Statutes and Customs', embodying the spirit and rule of the Founder, and most of these remained part of the Constitution in modified form, and were re-read at each successive Chapter General until the end.

In his second 'Custom', this Master spoke of the 'Exercise of Knighthood for Jesus Christ', and struck a note of warning against the misuse of wealth by the Knights:

'Our Order', it reads, 'has ever since its foundation been endowed, augmented and enriched by the liberality, assistance and favour of the Holy and Apostolic See and of Catholic Kings and Princes, and of devout Christians, with lands, possessions, jurisdictions, graces, privileges and exemptions; that the Knights, who should make their profession in it, might adorn their Knighthood with a true charity, the Mother and solid foundation of all virtues; with hospitality and a sincere attachment to the faith, and being employed in these various functions, might only seek to distinguish themselves by a course of virtue. . . .

'Soldiers of Jesus Christ are designed only to fight for His glory, to maintain His worship and the Catholic faith, to love and reverence justice, to favour, support and defend such as are oppressed without neglecting the duties of Holy Hospitality. . . . Thus the Knights Hospitaller acquitting themselves

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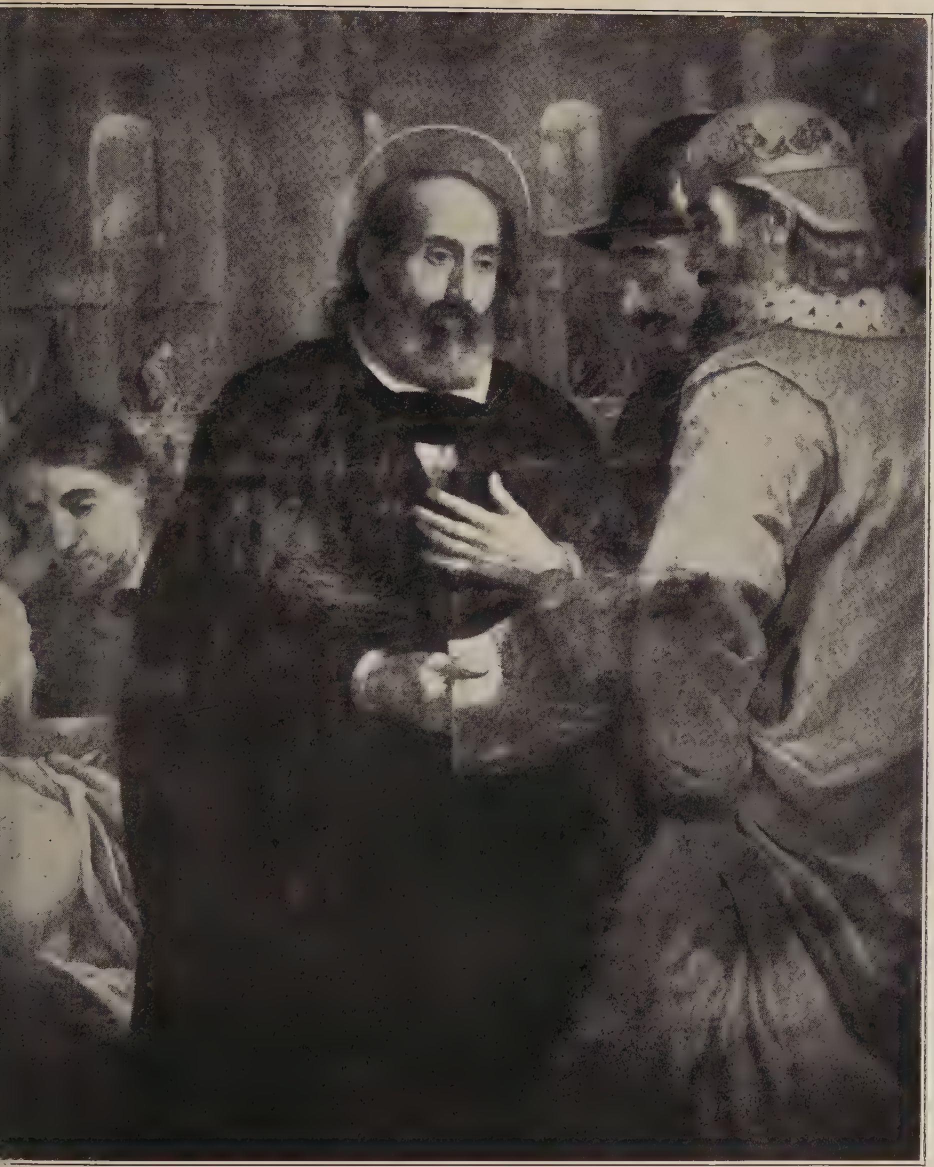
[1] Ruggero des Moulins, who was Rector of the Hospital in Jerusalem from 1177 to 1187, was the first to assume the title of 'Grand Master'.



BLESSED GERARD AND GODFREY DE BOUILLON

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truly of both these sorts of duties, are to wear on their clothes a Cross of eight points, to put them in mind of bearing always in their hearts the Cross of Jesus Christ, adorned with the eight virtues[1] that attend It, and that, after a bountiful distribution of alms, they take the sword in hand to attack and demolish the Mohammedans and such as deviate from the faith. . . .' The Enactment concluded by calling for 'an exact observance of what they promised to God when they made the three Vows of Chastity, Obedience, and Poverty appointed by the Rule and the practice of all other moral and divine virtues, so that being inflamed by charity they may have no dread upon their spirits at taking the sword in hand and exposing themselves with prudence, temperance and fortitude to all sorts of dangers, for the honour of Christ our Saviour and his Holy Cross, and for the defence of justice, widows, and orphans. There is no greater charity that can be shown than in sacrificing one's life for one's friend. . . .'

In this spirit, Raymond du Puy did much to rally the young Order to the banner of the Christians who, under their King of Jerusalem, were endeavouring to hold the Holy Land against the Turk. But the infidel forces proved too strong, and the story accordingly follows the struggles of the Brethren against the Saracens for their retention of the Holy Land, their final expulsion from Jerusalem in 1291, and their wanderings westward in search of a headquarters.

These headquarters were established, in turn, at Cyprus until 1310; at Rhodes for two centuries 1310–1523, where they built and fortified with fame and splendour, and whence the Grand Master Fra Philip Villiers de l'Isle-Adam conducted his masterly retreat before the Turkish forces of Suleiman I; for short periods at Candia; at Messina; at Baia near Naples; at Cività Vecchia near Rome; at Viterbo; at Marseilles; at Villefranche; at Nice; and even for two months upon the High Seas in the Flagship of the Order, *La Caracca*, the Grand Master and Council being unable to find a convenient or friendly habitation on land.

At length in the year 1527 the Emperor Charles V, on the suggestion of Pope Clement VII, considered the donation to the Order of his feudal Isle of Malta and its dependencies and also the City of Tripoli, which was in his dominion. Commissioners were sent by the Emperor to inspect this lonely

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[1] *L'Histoire des Ordres Monastiques, Religieuses et Militaires*, 1715, par Hélyot et de Bonyon, identifies these points with the Eight Beatitudes. *Vide* Part III, p. 111.

Island and report upon it as a suitable headquarters. They stated in their report:

> 'That the Island was nothing more than a rock six or seven leagues in length, four or five in width and about twenty in circumference; that they found on the surface only three or four feet of stony soil, not favourable for the growing of corn; that with the exception of some fountains situated in the back of the Island it was lacking drinking water; that it was devoid of woods; that the capital called Città Notabile was situated in the middle of the Island on a high sharp rock, with no fortifications other than simple walls and a few towers raised over the gates and not more than 1300 paces in circumference. . . .' They added 'there were only about 12,000 inhabitants, men, women, and children, poor and miserable because of the bareness of the soil, scattered through different villages.'

Despite the physical disadvantages just described, the Grand Master, in default of a better place in which his Order might rest, accepted the proffered gift. The Emperor, accordingly, on the 23rd March, 1530, signed a Charter which vested the Order of S. John of Jerusalem with the perpetual sovereignty of Malta and Gozo and the city of Tripoli.[1]

Conditions of the gift included a perpetual peace with Sicily on the part of the Order, and the acknowledgement of the superiority of the Emperor over Malta itself by the annual presentation of a falcon to his Viceroy at Sicily.

There was also included the right of selection by the Emperor for submission to the Pope of a candidate to the Bishopric of Malta.[2] Three names were to be forwarded by the Grand Master to the Viceroy of Sicily, for this purpose; one of whom, at least, was to be a subject of the Emperor. Furthermore, the Bishop on appointment was to receive the Grand Cross of the Order and to be admitted a member of the Sacred Council.

The original deed of grant may be seen to-day in a glass case beneath the portrait of the Bailli Jacques de Verdelin in the armoury in the Palace of Valletta.

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[1] Tripoli was abandoned in 1551 by the Order.

[2] The exercise of this right by the King of the Two Sicilies, the successor in title of the Emperor, became at various times a source of contention between the Order and that Kingdom.

The Maltese People

What of this small people of the Maltese Islands which the Order was to govern for the next two hundred and sixty-eight years?

The Commissioners, who had reported to the Emperor, were not concerned with anything save Malta as a naval and military base. But there was a hidden Malta, and some decades were to pass before its significance was to attract the attention of the Knights themselves.

The Island people, despite their small numbers, had already great traditions and a history all their own, reaching back to the twilight of fable. In the centuries immediately preceding the advent of the Order, the isolated position of Malta had laid it open to the ravages of the Goths and Saracens and its economic life was, in the year 1530, at a low ebb. The inhabitants, however, had received Christianity from the preaching of S. Paul, and had, despite infidel invasions, professed the faith from Apostolic times, maintaining an established Church and religious institutions.

They had entered Western civilization as the subjects of various European monarchs who had held Malta as their fief—Count Roger the Norman and his house in the years 1090–1194, the Suabian dynasty of Henry VI of Germany 1194–1266, the Angevin Kings 1266–1282, the Aragonese 1282–1410, and the Castilians 1410–1530. Under these rulers legal and political institutions and civic customs developed.

A recognized nobility came into being, these various sovereigns creating hereditary titles in favour of their Maltese subjects. The Grand Master likewise, as the Sovereign Prince, created titles of nobility.

Thus a Maltese peerage exists to-day, and is recognized by the British Crown, the first creation reaching back to the year 1350.

The Maltese people had also a distinctive language of their own, with a complicated grammar and syntax, and a large vocabulary. It was not in any sense an Italian patois, but was of Punic or Eastern origin. They had a traditional living literature in folk-song and story largely tinged by Eastern thought. Their Latin records, of the days before the Order, reflect many phases of European history of immense value to an understanding of the political and religious life of the times. In the Maltese people, whether dwelling in their small home or as emigrants in the littoral of the Mediterranean where they were, and still are, found in great numbers, was evidenced a distinct national ethos. This curiously, and happily, united many elements of the dim mysterious East with those of Western culture.

In Malta, thenceforth, the Order settled, becoming known after its world-renowned achievements in the Great Siege when the Cross utterly defeated the Crescent by the more popular title of the 'Order of Malta'. Throughout the centuries to follow both in its Headquarters in Malta and in its Commanderies, which had sprung up in most Christian kingdoms, it became extremely popular, not only with the poor whom it employed and aided as did other monastic institutions, but also with the scions of noble houses to whom it offered an adventurous and exciting career. Vast grants of lands and other donations continued to be made to these Commanderies by pious people; and contributions from Kings, Princes, and their subjects also reached the central government at Malta.

Features of the Constitution of the Order

Papal authority enlarged the scope and power of the organization, so that during its occupation of Malta the Order of S. John of Jerusalem became 'a Noble Republic', resembling to some extent that of Venice or Genoa in its government.

The supreme authority was vested in a Chapter General. This was formed of the higher dignitaries residing in Malta, and of the Grand Priors and Baillis who were in control of the Commanderies on the Continent. In this way the whole body of the Brethren were represented. The Grand Master convened the Chapter General on the authority of a Papal Bull, and presided over its meetings. This Assembly made new laws, revoked, confirmed, or modified the existing ones, and they were empowered to take cognizance of any matters public or private, exterior or internal, touching the Order all over the world.

The statutes adopted for the future governance of the Brethren were submitted to the Pope for his confirmation, and when this was received they became binding in perpetuity, unless repealed by a succeeding Chapter General.

Originally at Jerusalem and afterwards at Rhodes, the Chapter General met every five years or in emergency more

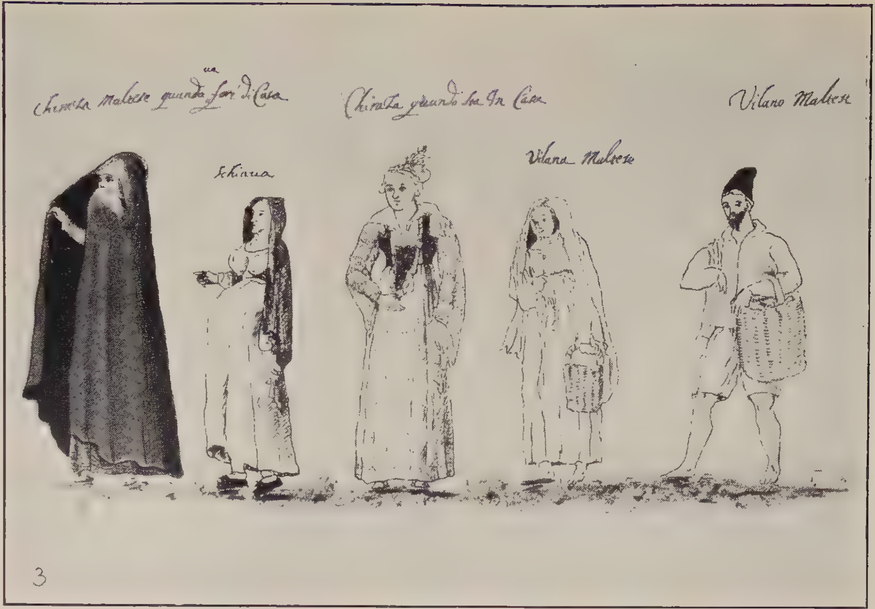
Chiretta maltese quando fora di Casa
Schiava
Chiretta quando sta In Casa
Vilana Maltese
Vilano Maltese
3
1
2
3
4
5

Photo *Gouder*

MALTESE COSTUMES OF THE XVI–XVII CENTURIES

1 Lady out of doors, in Faldetta. 2 Slave. 3 Lady in her house. 4 and 5 Peasants.

Contemporary drawing by Venetian Knight, Fra Opizo Guidotti, in Valletta Museum.

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frequently, no mean achievement considering the difficulties of travel in the Dark Ages. Later, the Chapter General met only every ten years. After the meeting in the year 1631 there was a long interval, and no other Chapter General met in Malta until 1776, when it was convened by the Grand Master de Rohan.

An immense collection of laws had come thus, in process of time, into being and the organization passed far beyond the simple rules laid down by Raymond du Puy.

Despite a changing world without, there was little disposition within the Order in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to repeal the fundamental laws. To the end, curious rules and archaic forms from remote ages were retained and their presence hampered the Order in its growth. They could be suspended only in special cases by Papal dispensation in favour of individual Knights. As will be seen later, adherence to an ancient rule actually prevented the Grand Master from treating effectively with the Directory in Paris at a critical moment in the French Revolution.

The Grand Master was elected by the vote of the Knights who happened to be at Malta, in accordance with an elaborate procedure laid down by the various Chapters General. He held office for life and did not usually leave the shores of the Island.

When the Chapter General was not assembled the supreme authority passed into the hands of the Grand Master who was required to act through a Council of State. This was known as the Sacred Council (*Sacro Consiglio*). It was formed of all Grand Crosses present in the Convent and the Piliers of each Langue. The respective powers of the Grand Master and of this Council were defined by many statutes. The remission of punishments, the conduct of foreign affairs, and the appointment to many offices were the prerogatives of the Grand Master, but his actions in these matters had to be reported to the Council. The Council could not initiate matters for discussion, and could consider only the subjects laid before them by the Grand Master.

The seat of Government of the Order in their first years in Malta was in the quarter of Il Borgo.[1] After the Great Siege in 1565, the Grand Master governed from his Palace in the newly built Valletta. He was thenceforth, by agreement between the Great Powers of Europe and the Pope, recognized as a sovereign Prince. His subjects were not only the people of Malta—from whom he recruited an army, a navy and a civil service—but also the multitude of Knights and their dependents in the various Commanderies scattered through the different countries of Europe.

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[1] Later called Città Vittoriosa.

Long before the Order came to Malta, they had found a large devolution of authority necessary to manage their many complicated interests. Langues were therefore instituted to group the Commanderies overseas according to the nationality of the Knights.

These Langues were eight in number—Provence, Auvergne, France, Italy, Aragon, Germany, Castile and Portugal, and a united Langue for England, Ireland and Scotland.

The Commanderies in each Langue were grouped under a Grand Prior who was responsible to Malta for the Knights in them.

Some special dignity or office in the organization of the Order at Headquarters was attached to each of these Langues, these honours being generally held by the Knights in right of seniority. Thus the Grand Marshal was chosen from the Knights of Auvergne. The Great Hospitaller—whose function was the direction of the famous Hospital at Malta and the relief work of the Order throughout the world—was always one of the Knights of 'France'. The office of Turcopilier or leader of the cavalry was usually given to the Langue of England. After the suppression of this Langue at the Protestant Reformation this high command was enjoyed by one of the other Langues.

To each of these Langues was assigned an 'Auberge' at Malta, and these massive and beautiful buildings formed a feature in the life of the Order. The Auberge was managed by a Conventual Bailli or Pilier of the Langue. It was used as a centre in which to train the novices who were required to spend two years in Malta doing their 'Caravans' before their final profession. In the Auberges, too, the Knights met formally and discussed in committee affairs touching their Commanderies on the Continent. They reported their decisions to the Council or the Grand Master.

At an early stage the value of supervision was appreciated at Headquarters. Permanent officials called 'Receivers' were appointed to the Commanderies by the Grand Master. Their duty was to see that all the revenues and fees due to the Treasury at Malta were collected from the Commanderies and in due course forwarded to Headquarters. They had also to furnish a monthly return of the financial state of each Commandery. These Receivers often lived separately from the local community in houses of their own.

In addition, the Grand Priories were subject to inspection directly from Malta. For this purpose the Grand Master selected and appointed 'Visitors' who reported every five years upon the conditions and discipline in the Commanderies.

A vast number of administrative Departments under the Grand Master and Council functioned in this last epoch in Malta, multiplying as is the way under other governments.

These diverse departments, at least fifty in number and elaborately housed and staffed, were presided over by individual Knights or by Committees of Knights, known as 'Congregations', who were appointed by the Grand Master, or held office 'ex-officio'.[1]

The Treasury, after the Council, was the paramount power, and controlled the other departments as to ways and means. It dealt directly with the twenty-nine Receivers in the Commanderies overseas.

The vow of obedience by which the members of the whole body were bound proved of particular advantage in the organization of the naval and military forces of the Order. A smoothly working and highly centralized international army and fleet were thus rendered possible, and these could be moved about against the infidel at the will of the Grand Master, who at any time could call up the Knights, conventual chaplains and serving brothers for service in the Mediterranean or on the field.

A fundamental rule of the Order precluded the Brethren from taking up arms against any Christian Prince, and imposed a duty of neutrality upon the Grand Master in regard to European wars. An actual statute to this effect, issued by the Grand Master John Ferdinand d'Heredia in the year 1377, may be read in most of the histories of the Order, and becomes of such importance to the Order in its relation to France in the period of the French Revolution that some of it may be quoted here in translation of the original Latin text:

> 'We forbid all and every of our Brethren to engage in Wars made by Christians upon one another, on pain of

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[1] A remarkable list of these, in the last phase, will be seen in the tables of receipts and expenditure for the year 1788 shown in De Boisgelin's *Malta*.

> being deprived of the Habit. . . . We likewise forbid the Priors, the Castellan of Emposta and Commanders, to allow any Brothers to serve in the Armies of Christian Princes unless they have received an express order from the Prince whose subjects they are, in consideration whereof they may grant them leave to go, but not to carry the arms or colours of the Order; yet, if it be in the defence of the Order, or they attend the Grand Prior in such wars, they have leave to carry them.'

Ranks within the Order

Originally the 'Brethren of the Order' were divided simply into Knights, Chaplains and Servants at Arms. As the organization grew in numbers, a complicated grading developed in these classes, and by the eighteenth century there were formed different degrees of Knighthood, several distinctions in the priesthood and a number of persons included in a minor membership. We must therefore tell something of the principal ranks within the Order at the date of our story.

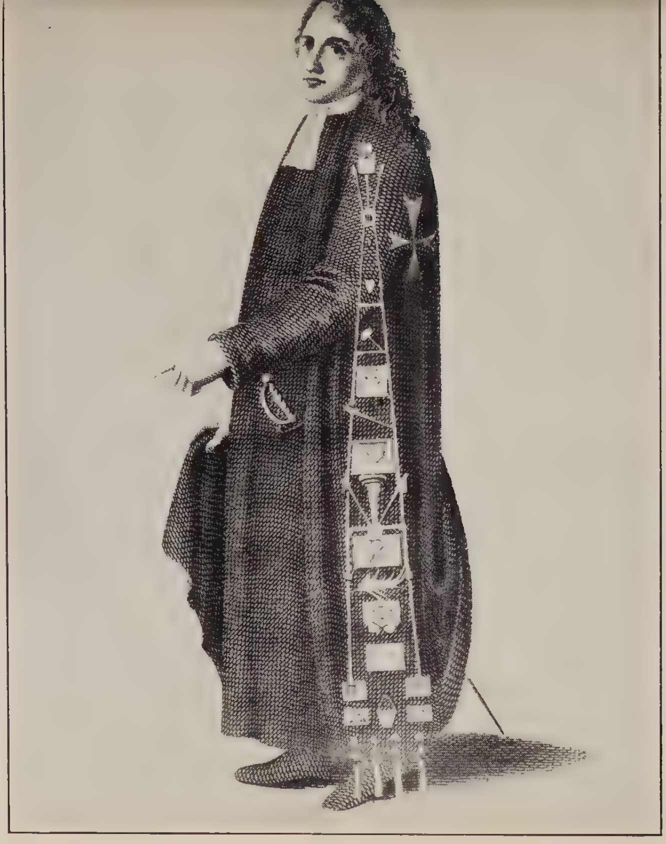
The Knights of Justice, laymen as it were in minor orders, came in precedence before even the ordained priests of the Order, and held most of the positions of power and place. None but a Knight of Justice was qualified to be advanced to the dignities of Grand Prior or Bailli or that of Grand Master.

The Knight of Justice was not, in theory, supposed to work for his living, but wholly to devote himself to the interests of the Order. An exemption, however, came to be made in this respect: he was permitted to take employment in the service of kings or princes. Thus, many Knights, pending promotion 'in the Convent', became 'seconded' for special appointments in foreign Courts as 'gentlemen of the household', for naval or military duty, or on diplomatic missions —often to their great renown and remuneration.

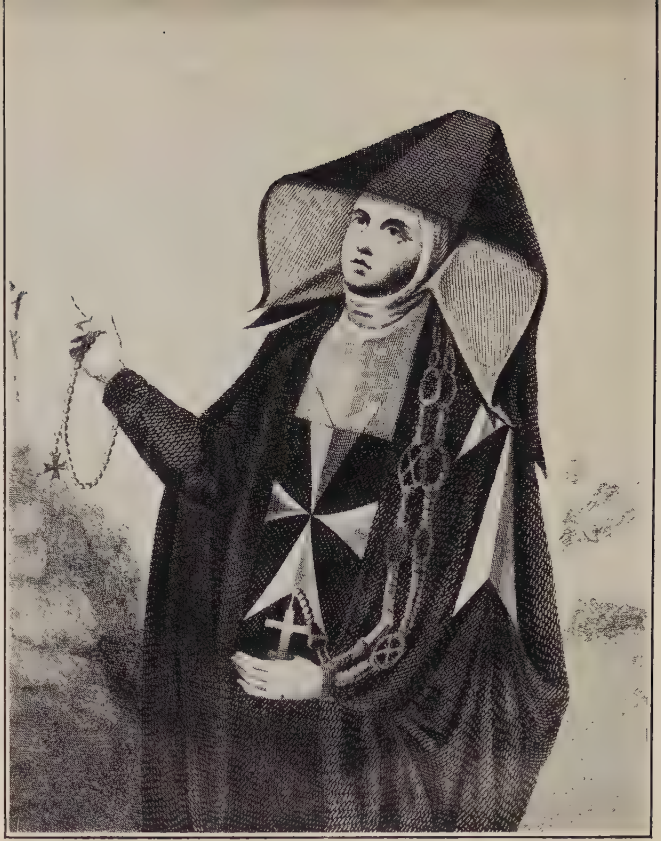
Those Knights who had a seat on the Sacred Council or enjoyed certain other high offices were known as 'Grand Crosses'.

The Knights of Honour and Devotion were those persons who, otherwise eligible to become Knights of Justice, did not take the full vows.

The Knights of Grace were persons who, whether or not of noble blood, were, on the initiative of the Grand Master and Sacred Council, and by Papal dispensation, received into



KNIGHT OF THE ORDER IN HABIT OF RECEPTION



'UNE DAME MALTAISE'
(Nun of the Order)

Engravings from Boisgelin's *Malta*.

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the Order as a mark of esteem for valuable and meritorious services rendered.

The Chaplains of the Order and the Servants of Arms were not subject to the tests of nobility required of Knights of Justice. ‘ They ought not, however,’ in the words of a statute of the Grand Master La Vallette, ‘ to be taken out of the rabble without any choice which would be a ready way to make them contemptible, and therefore we enact that nobody shall be admitted a Brother Chaplain or Servant of Arms till he has duly proved that he is born of gentle and creditable parents, that he has never followed any mean or servile art or business . . . provided however that this regulation does not extend to such as have signalized themselves in military actions or by eminent services rendered to the Order.’

All the churches of the Order—in the Grand Priories overseas as well as at Headquarters—were, for organisation and discipline, under an ‘ assembly of the clergy ’ at Malta under the presidency of the Prior of S. John’s Conventual Church ; and the full priests of the Order were accordingly known as ‘ Conventual Chaplains ’.

The Chaplains of the Order were thus distinguished from the ‘ priests of obedience ’ ; the latter were clerics employed in minor capacities by the Order at Headquarters or in local Commanderies.

A matriculation book kept at Malta recorded details of the admission of Chaplains and Servants d’Armes.

Some offices of honour and emolument were enjoyed by the Chaplains and the Servants of Arms, and a certain number of Commanderies in each Grand Priory were assigned to them, though most of the Commanderies were enjoyed by the Knights of Justice.

A Donat of Devotion was a person who was affiliated to the Order for services rendered. He received a minor Cross of six points. He was not required to take monastic vows.

The brothers ‘ de stage ’ were, in the words of an historian, ‘ a kind of vassal employed in the meanest offices of the Convent or Hospital ’.

The Nuns of the Order, established in various centres in France, Spain, Italy and Malta, required of their members for admission to the higher ranks of their Choir the same exacting proofs of nobility as did the Knights of Justice.

The Making of a Knight

The young aspirant to the grade of a Knight of Justice had to present himself in the Grand Priory in the country of his home and furnish proofs of a very exacting standard of nobility before special Commissioners appointed to investigate his case.

His nobility was supposed to rest upon the possession of pure and noble blood in *all* his direct ancestors for a number of generations and for a definite number of years.

The requirements as to the number of noble ancestors and the period in which they had enjoyed nobility varied with each Langue.

Thus the French Langues required eight quarterings of nobility and would not for a long time accept as sufficient the 'noblesse de la cloche ou de la robe', which came to be recognized by the King in France in persons holding certain offices of state.

The Italian Langue required four quarterings only—but the candidate was required to show that his ancestors had been noble both by name and by arms in the four principal branches of his family tree for two hundred years.

Most exacting of all was the German Langue, which required sixteen quarterings of nobility—which condition must have very much restricted the number of possible candidates.

The proofs required at Malta of this varying nobility were fourfold—testimonial, documentary, local and secret.

Four sponsors, themselves of noble extraction, had to testify to the suitability of the candidates as to social standards, morals, and physical fitness for service in the field.

In the documentary proof, any certificates of birth, patents of nobility, and title-deeds and the like, asked for by the Commissioners, had to be put into evidence by the candidate.

Wills and marriage settlements were accepted with reserve, 'by reason of the opportunity', as an old writer shrewdly puts it, 'given therein to notaries to bestow upon the parties mentioned any titles or qualities they may wish to display without examining whether they were entitled to them or not'.[1]

The local proof required the Commissioners to take evidence either personally or through the local Priors in the countries of the various families mentioned in the claim. The interrogatories of the Commissioners of Admission included one asking 'if the ancestors had always lived and still lived like gentlemen on their revenues'. Any admixture of a 'mean mechanic trade', or even of what is to us an 'honourable profession', within the required degrees debased the blood. An exception, however, came to be made in favour of candidates whose parents had been bankers in the cities of Florence, Genoa, Pisa, or Lucca and elsewhere.

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[1] *Archives of Valletta*, Vol. 2256; printed pamphlet, 'Modèle pour servir à la Reception de Messieurs Les Chevaliers de Malte'.

Secret investigations and enquiries were further made by the Commissioners or their agents, who sometimes disguised themselves for the purpose, as to the truth of the statements of claim.

A report from the Commissioners of Admission, with supporting documents or attested copies, was then forwarded to the Grand Master at Malta and submitted by him to the Tribunal of Nobility for scrutiny. If they were favourably received the case came before the Sacred Council for a final decision by vote, and if the application was approved the Grand Prior was directed to give the habit to the candidates, with imposing ritual, in the Church of the Grand Priory. A Bull of Reception was then issued by the Grand Master to the candidate and registered in the Chancellery at Malta. A year's probation in a local Commandery often preceded the reception.

The young Knight sometime after his reception was sent to his Auberge at Malta where he spent two years doing his 'caravans', by serving in the ships of the Order, or in the commissioned ranks of the army, or otherwise under discipline of the Commissioner of Novices in the Auberge of his particular Langue.

The new Knight at the end of his two years' caravans was considered fully professed and eligible for employment in the Order, and left his Auberge at Malta for such special duties as might be assigned to him by the Council, or to return to his country to reside in a Commandery until called up again by Headquarters.

The usual age of profession was eighteen, the caravans at Malta being deferred to the twentieth year.

Boys were, however, admitted at the age of twelve years, and were sent to Malta as pages to the Grand Master. Sixteen were employed at a time, and selection for this honour was greatly coveted. In later days, due to the 'passion of parents to advance their children in life', as one old critic puts it, 'the practice arose of making Knights of children while still in their cradles'.

So it came about that on the eve of the Revolution, a child, the son of the Count d'Artois and nephew of the King, was found installed as Grand Prior of France, with disaster to the interests of the Order.

Costume

The costume of the Hospitallers consisted of a black tunic with a white Cross, having eight points, worn on the left breast, and a black cloak, also with a cross, over the tunic.

In time of war they wore over their armour or uniform a dalmatic or 'soubreveste', of red colour with a straight white Cross, of four points only, on front and back.

As time went on this costume lost some of its simplicity. The Chevaliers could wear, if they wished, the eight-pointed Cross in gold, enamelled in white or jewelled, as an ornament by a chain from their neck. The Chaplains also could wear this ornamental Cross by permission of the Grand Master.

By the eighteenth century much of the primitive and monastic appearance of the costume of the Knights had disappeared. The Chevaliers in this century wore their official costume only at General Chapters, church services, and grand ceremonies. Elsewhere it contented them to have a white Maltese Cross embroidered on the breast of the coat of the ordinary civil dress of the day or to wear a very small model of the Cross in gold or enamel inserted in a button-hole of the coat. The official full dress still consisted of the black tunic; a voluminous black cloak, the *manto à punta*, with long wide sleeves; a girdle and a sword. The long cloak was not allowed to trail, but was carried over the left arm.

In the Sacred Council the Grand Crosses wore a simpler close habit, called 'the cloche', with the Cross on the breast.

The Grand Master, however, always wore a distinctive dress, a black tunic reaching below the knees, of silk in summer and of wool in winter, and a black cloak. He wore a Maltese Cross of greater size than that of the other Knights, as does the Grand Master of the Order in Rome to-day. A purse betokening charity hung from a girdle at his waist. A curious high-crowned hat, a 'berretone', completed the costume. Thus attired, the Grand Master Hompesch received the envoys of General Bonaparte in 1798.

The full dress of the Knight included a remarkable scapular which hung from the left shoulder to the ground; it consisted of the emblems of the Passion of Our Lord in carved wood, held together by black silk, as shown in the illustration. A sword and black cap completed the costume.

The Chaplains wore the usual black ecclesiastical robe of their country with a white Cross on the breast. In the choir they wore a cotta and a mozzetta, the latter at first black, and later, by grant of Pope Clement XI, violet edged with red.

An interesting collection of these costumes and insignia may be seen in the Museum at Valletta and in that at S. John's Gate, Clerkenwell, London.

The small cross worn by the Chevaliers in the eighteenth century is much prized by collectors.

Keeping of Records

Reverence for the written word was a feature in the history of the Middle Ages, and of necessity, in the absence of printing, if life was to be lived in due order and decency. This reverence survived the advent of the printing-press, and nothing was better kept, down to the end of the eighteenth century, than the records of the Order in the Grand Priories and in Malta itself.

From an early date a duty was placed upon every Grand Prior, upon pain of losing one year's revenue, 'to select a safe place in the principal or most honourable house in his Priory . . . to lodge in it all the privileges, writings, instruments and authentic records . . . of the Priory and of the Commanderies and benefices that be within the district'. Not the least marvellous feat, in the westward retreat of the Order from the Holy Land, was the transport with them, in their laborious wanderings from place to place, of most of the records of their government—documents reaching back to the eleventh century in Jerusalem.

When they settled in Malta and a time of internal peace ensued, many erudite archivists and historians in the Order rearranged these ancient records, indexed and annotated them. From pens now forgotten many learned dissertations, upon special subjects treated in them, were written and filed away with the originals.

When the Knights were forced by General Bonaparte to leave Malta in the year 1798, they were not permitted to carry their records away with them. Many of these volumes were destroyed during the subsequent French occupation. Others were lost in the confusion of the rule of the British Commissioners in the early years of the nineteenth century. A substantial portion, however, of the records of the Order, from its very beginnings, remain to-day in the hands of the various local Authorities in Malta, and have afforded priceless materials for individual students of European history.

The collection remaining in the *Archivio* in the Public Registry at Valletta reaches the large number of over 6000 volumes. This is only one of several centres in which the papers of the departed Order are deposited.

No complete catalogue, unfortunately, of their contents has yet been printed, and a systematic publication is still wanted of the text of the more important documents.[1]

Notable amongst these records, illustrative of social life in the principal countries of Europe during various ages, are the Wills of the Knights and the Visitations of the Commanderies.

After their occupation of Malta, Latin came to be abandoned as the official language of the Order. The records of the Council of the Order and of the departments under it were written from this time in Italian, possibly by reason of the proximity of Italy or the constant personal contact of the heads of the Order with Rome. The transactions of the various Langues were naturally written in the languages of the particular nation represented. Latin, however, was retained on occasions in certain departments, and many formal letters from the Grand Master to sovereigns and princes were to the end written in this tongue.

These were some of the features of the Constitution of the Order in its last epoch.

* * *

France, in the three Langues of Provence, Auvergne and France, contributed nearly a third of the revenue of the central government and a third in numbers of the Knighthood.

In these Langues there were six Grand Priories—those of France, Champagne, S. Giles, Toulouse, Aquitaine, Auvergne, dividing between them some 400 rich Commanderies.

The French Knights had long taken a large share in the government of Malta. In their own land of France they held a position of popularity and also of privilege. They had a place in the sunlight of the Courts of Louis XIV, XV, and XVI.

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[1] The present learned Librarian of the Bibliotheca in Valletta, the Cavalier Scicluna, has written notably upon the Archives in Valletta and upon the Manuscript Catalogues, and upon the records of the Napoleonic period in relation to Malta.

1114

It is not possible to take, in this book, a very close view of local life in these six Grand Priories. It was active, intellectual and, despite its luxury, religious to the end.

Let us now proceed to one of the scenes of our story, the great stronghold of the Temple at Paris, and tell the reader how the Knights acquired it; what it looked like at the time of the Great Revolution, and what manner of men the Knights in France had then become.

CHAPTER II

THE TEMPLE AT PARIS IN THE MIDDLE AGES AND THE RENAISSANCE

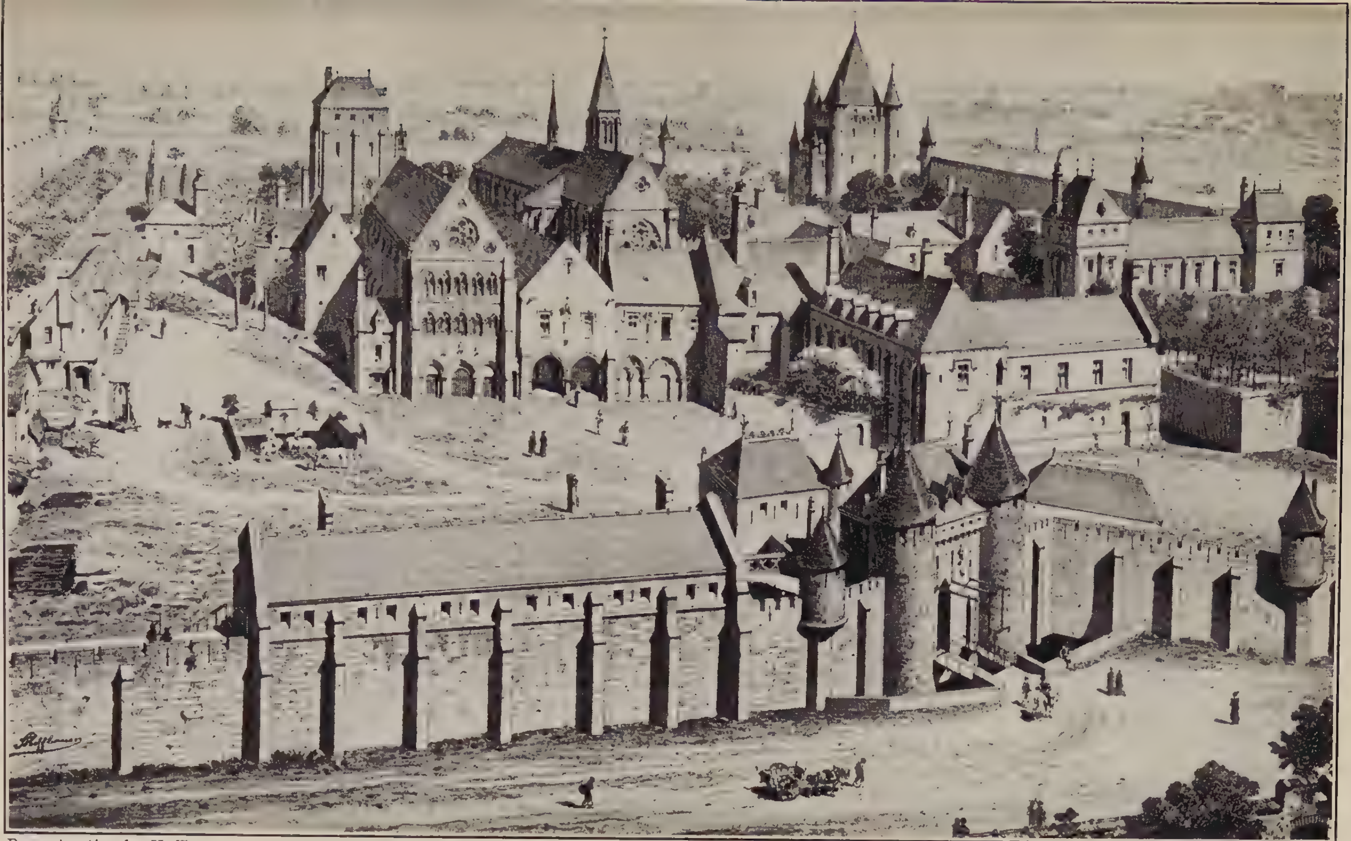
The Commandery of S. Jean de Latran—State of the Temple, 1313 *—Growth of Paris—Knights 'of Rhodes', 'of the Temple', 'of Malta'—The Marais—Transformations—Relations with other Religious Orders—Rural Domain—The Bailli du Temple —Good Landlords*

THE Temple, at Paris, was originally a stronghold of the Knights Templar. This Order was founded in 1117 by a number of French Knights accompanying Godfrey de Bouillon to the Holy Land in the first Crusade. They fought valiantly on the fields of Acre in 1191, side by side with the Knights of S. John, with whom they entered into friendly rivalry. Unfortunately, with the increasing wealth and power of both Orders, this friendly rivalry ultimately developed into bitter jealousy and animosity, even to the extent, on an occasion, of armed conflict with each other.

Under the King of France, Philippe le Hardi, the Preceptors of the Knights Templar began to have disputes with the Crown, and under King Philippe le Bel their vast wealth became fatal to them.

This latter King had beheld with cupidity their great riches whilst he was enjoying in the Temple itself the protection and hospitality of their Preceptor, Jacques de Molay, during an insurrection in Paris. On October 13, 1307, the Grand Master was arrested in the Temple by order of the King, with 140 Knights who had come there to attend a Chapter. They were charged by the Crown with the most abominable crimes; and the process dragged out for many years. Torture wrung from some of the Brethren a statement, true or false, of their guilt in respect of the many accusations of immorality brought against them; they were condemned to death, but they all died protesting their innocence. The Grand Commanders of Aquitaine and of Normandy were the last to suffer in March 1311.

The Order of Templars was abolished in 1313, by the Pope Clement V, without, however, any expression by him as to the



Reconstruction by Hoffbauer.

Musée Carnavalet

ENCLOS DU TEMPLE IN 1450

To face p. 20

culpability of the Knights, and its riches were bestowed upon the Order of S. John of Jerusalem—but Philippe le Bel had already seized upon all the portable property of the Temple in Paris, and the other Priories lay derelict.

Thus the Knights Templar passed from the scene of our story, leaving one hundred Commanderies in France to the Knights of S. John.

The Commandery of S. Jean de Latran

At this time the chef-lieu in Paris of the Order of S. John of Jerusalem was established in the Commandery of S. Jean de Latran. This was situated on the south side of the Seine, opposite the Sorbonne and near the hôtel de Cluny.

Here resided, in 1313, Fra Simon le Rat, who governed as Grand Prior the Commanderies grouped into the Grand Priory of France. The Grand Priors of the affiliated Grand Priories of Aquitaine and of Champagne also had official residence here. These three Grand Priories together formed, as has been mentioned, the 'Langue de France'.

The Temple appeared to the Knights of S. John, when they came to possess it, a more suitable place from which to govern. Its superior fortifications and its closer proximity to the Louvre, 'that central keep of feudalism', or to the 'châtelet'—where the Grand Prior required the constant attendance of his procurator to protect their rights and privileges—may have suggested the change.

The Commandery of S. Jean de Latran ceased to be their Headquarters and was known from this time as the 'ancient hospital'. It remained a 'chambre prieurale' with those other Commanderies of Choisy-le-Temple, of Launay-les-Sens and of the Temple itself—that is to say, a Commandery of which the appointments and revenues were enjoyed personally by the Grand Prior.

With its remarkable Tour Bichat, this Commandery lasted until the year 1854, when it was demolished. The Rue de Latran marks the spot to-day.

State of the Temple, 1313

A delay of twenty years took place before the Knights of S. John obtained undisturbed possession of their new Commanderies, for the King and his successors[1] required large sums of money by way of 'compositions' before finally surrendering the property.

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[1] Philippe le Bel, Louis X, and Philip V.

In a representation to the King, Philip V, Fra Simon le Rat complained of the miserable state in which the Order received the Priory of the Temple and its dependencies. Depredations had been made by the King's officers. The conventual buildings had long stood uninhabited and were in decay. The furniture had been taken away. The fortifications were in disrepair. The church was closed. Tenants had deserted their holdings and had avoided paying their rents under their leases, or were unable to do so. The necessary equipment for tillage or utensils for farming had been stolen or had been sold for a song, and could not now be replaced for lack of funds.

The economic state of France was adverse to the interests of the new owners, both in the Temple and in their other vast possessions in France. The misery of the country was general. Wars had taken away the able-bodied men from farms, and lands remained untilled.

The Priory of the Temple had originally consisted of a remarkable church, a great donjon tower, and a convent, the latter probably nothing more ornate than a large farmhouse converted to the needs of a community, and these buildings had been strongly fortified by their first owners by a vast surrounding wall twenty-five feet high—the space so contained being known as the 'Enclos du Temple'.

At the time of its transfer to the Knights of S. John, the Temple still stood without the city walls, and it was surrounded by lands belonging to the Templars known as Le Marais, stretching to the north or north-east.

To understand the unique position which the Grand Priory of France was henceforth to maintain in the capital until the Revolution swept it away, as the last stronghold of feudalism, some account must be given of the various transformations of Paris from the Middle Ages to the end of the eighteenth century.

Growth of Paris

The fortifications of Paris, as we know them, first appeared in the time of the Carlovingians, when Charles the Bald protected, by walls and towers of stone and wood, the *Ile du Cité* and its bridges, where stood the King's palace, the Courts of Justice, and some residences of officials, lay and ecclesiastic. The early Capets from Henri Comte de Paris to Louis VII extended these, building the second *enceinte* and adding the large and small *châtelet*, strongly fortified buildings, in the latter of which resided the newly created *prévôt*, a King's officer who now appeared as governor of the city and head of a police.

A settled municipal life begins. A *hanse* or market is fixed by the citizens, the river Seine brings commerce in its boats. Taxes upon citizens and duties upon merchandise are imposed in the interests of the community. In the course of time the guild system develops, and a *prévôt des marchands* is added to the civic authorities.

The narrow limits of the Ile du Cité did not suffice for the growing community. Many colleges, monasteries and hospitals, abbeys and mansions were founded on the north and south sides of the river. These were surrounded by lands containing farms under cultivation, or buildings in which dwelt the tenants or dependents of the owners. For protection, the residential portions of these lands were surrounded by a fortified wall, and this portion became known as an 'enclos', the outlying cultivated lands being known as 'courtilles', or 'cultures'. There were some thirty or forty of these, the Enclos de S. Geneviève, de S. Martin, de S. Merry, de S. Magloire and the like, and of them the Enclos du Temple was, perhaps, always the most remarkable.

The owners of these 'enclos', like other grand seigneurs in France, enjoyed in many cases the seigneurial rights of *haute, moyenne* and *basse justice*—the powers of life and death, and general control over the lives of their tenants and dependents if, as vassals, they failed to render them their seigneurial rights or perform their other duties.

As the fortifications were extended beyond the Ile, these little bourgs with their self-contained communities were brought within the city walls and the need for the fortifications of each 'enclos' vanished, the city assuming a more uniform appearance. As the power of the King increased, with Paris becoming 'the head and heart of a united France', the seigneurial powers of these owners were gradually diminished or extinguished, and the control of the citizens passed more and more into the hands of the prévôt in the châtelet.

Extensions of the city boundaries were made by Philippe Auguste 1190–1220, when lands upon the north and south sides of the river were included; by Charles V in 1370, by Louis XIII in 1625, and by Louis XVI in 1783, the last extension with which we are concerned.

The lands in the outlying districts which were thus successively brought within the jurisdiction of the châtelet naturally increased in value; the architectural features of the city altered, and the people and places so included were brought into near social relations with one another, and more directly under the Government of the King.

It was a notable feature of the Order of S. John that they secured from the Kings of France formal recognition of immunity from all local laws, even as they obtained from the Pope an independence of the local Bishop. From the fourteenth to the end of the eighteenth century, they were able thus to maintain themselves as an independent corporation in their home in the heart of Paris, governing in their own way their brethren, their tenants and dependents, and controlling the lands and houses in the large domain which they came to own.

This area of their control, both within and without the Enclos, was known as the *Censive du Temple*, and formed a curious *enclave*, from which the Order drew great political and social power.

From the isolation of their Enclos the Knights could witness the changing fortunes of the great city, without being involved in the calamities and agitations which fell upon it—in the civil wars fought in its streets, in the invasions of foreigners, and in the revolts of its citizens.

To the people of Paris the Enclos was a centre of refuge. The statutes of the Order required, to the end, that in the local Commandery no less than at Jerusalem or at Malta, a hospital or a guest-house should be maintained; and in the giving of alms and assistance to the poor of Paris, the Knights won popularity.

The Enclos could afford an asylum to many persons, to soldiers in the field, to fugitives from justice, or to those escaping the violence of their personal enemies.

The Brethren took part in many ways in the civic life. The Chaplains were sent to study at the Sorbonne; the Grand Prior employed the best architects and craftsmen of the city to beautify the Temple buildings, so that they came to be included in the sights of Paris; and the Knights, as the cloistered rule of their Order was relaxed, took a place in the fashionable and cultured circles of the Court.

Knights 'of Rhodes', 'of the Temple', 'of Malta'

The Hospitallers of S. John of Jerusalem, as already noted, became known, in the fourteenth century, as the 'Knights of Rhodes', from their occupation of that Island, which they took from the Saracens in the year 1309, when Foulque de Villaret was Grand Master, and where they maintained their general Headquarters until 1523. In the sixteenth century the Order became known as that of the Knights of Malta, but, in Paris, their association with the Temple became so fixed in the popular mind that they were also known as the 'Chevaliers du Temple'.

Before describing in a chapter to itself the imposing collection of buildings brought into being within the Enclos of the Temple by the Knights of S. John, let us say a word about the exploitation of the adjoining lands lying outside the walls.

The Marais

The district of the Marais is well known to the tourist of to-day who seeks in its old and narrow streets, with the help of a *Guide Bleu*, for some traces of the great mansions of Paris of the past, with their gaunt gateways, quiet courtyards, iron-guarded windows and curious angles, so suggestive of romance and intrigue.

It is not, however, generally known how far the development of this district was due to the initiative of the early owners of the Temple.

The present streets still bear many names which originated in the days of the Templars or of the Order of S. John, and their meanings may be obscure without some reference to the topography of the Middle Ages.

'Les Marais' were originally waste lands, dependencies of the Temple stretching north-east of it, some of these lying within the fortifications of the city and its gates; some, without the city walls, stretching right up to the hill of Potronville, now called Belleville. The neighbouring gates of the city were the Portes S. Martin, S. Denis and the Porte du Temple itself, which were moved into various positions with the successive extensions of the city boundaries.

Small cultivators—'maraicheurs' as they were called—were installed by the Grand Prior of the Temple as holders of plots with short leases, often only verbal ones, and were permitted to build small dwellings on them, or were given residences in or about the Enclos, in the beginning mere hutments or sheds from which to work their allotments.

The 'maraicheurs', in reclaiming this waste land, grew crops, vines, chestnuts, vegetables and fruit, and an increasing return in money or in kind came to the Temple. Such terrain was known as a 'marais', and, as already noted, the homestead with its land as a 'courtille', or 'culture'.

These isolated terrains were identified in the old rent-rolls, or in the leases where they existed, or in current speech, by names drawn from ancient landmarks, from local traditions, from the names of their various owners, or as fancy suggested.

The Archives of the Order, concerned with some of these, preserved in the Archives Nationales in Paris, record therefore many old place-names such as 'le marais de la Boucelle' (sur la chaussée de la bastide du Temple entre le Temple et S. Martin); 'le Pré du Temple'; 'la Terre aux Lions'; 'la grande courtille Vaugibert'; 'la plâtrière Cornot'; 'les courtilles Blanchard'; 'de Mesnil-Mautemps'[1]; 'Beauchamp'; 'Meries,' 'du pressoir Vandetar'; or to give a final instance, 'du Pet du Diable', so called from a prehistoric stone of enormous size, the origin of which, in a later century, Louis XIV ordered his archæologists to investigate.

This little agricultural community, grown up beside the Temple, brought in its train small tradesmen to buy and sell; artisans and craftsmen such as carpenters, wheelwrights, ironworkers, to supply the simple needs of the cultivators and of the Brethren in the Temple, and the economic life of the district developed in progressive variety.

Other trades which may interest the curious reader, mentioned by de Curzon in his account of the original leases, are indicative of the social progress of Paris. The tenants of the Temple included a *chasublier;* a *florelein*, a *harenger*, a *mazelinnier*—maker of vases of madre or alabaster; a *moustardier;* and an *ohyer*, this latter a person who kept ovens in which the small householder could have his joints roasted[2]; a *paonnier*, who sold hats trimmed with peacocks' feathers—such are a few of the ninety or more of the small commercial occupations of the Middle Ages, so individualist and personal, found in the records of the Temple.

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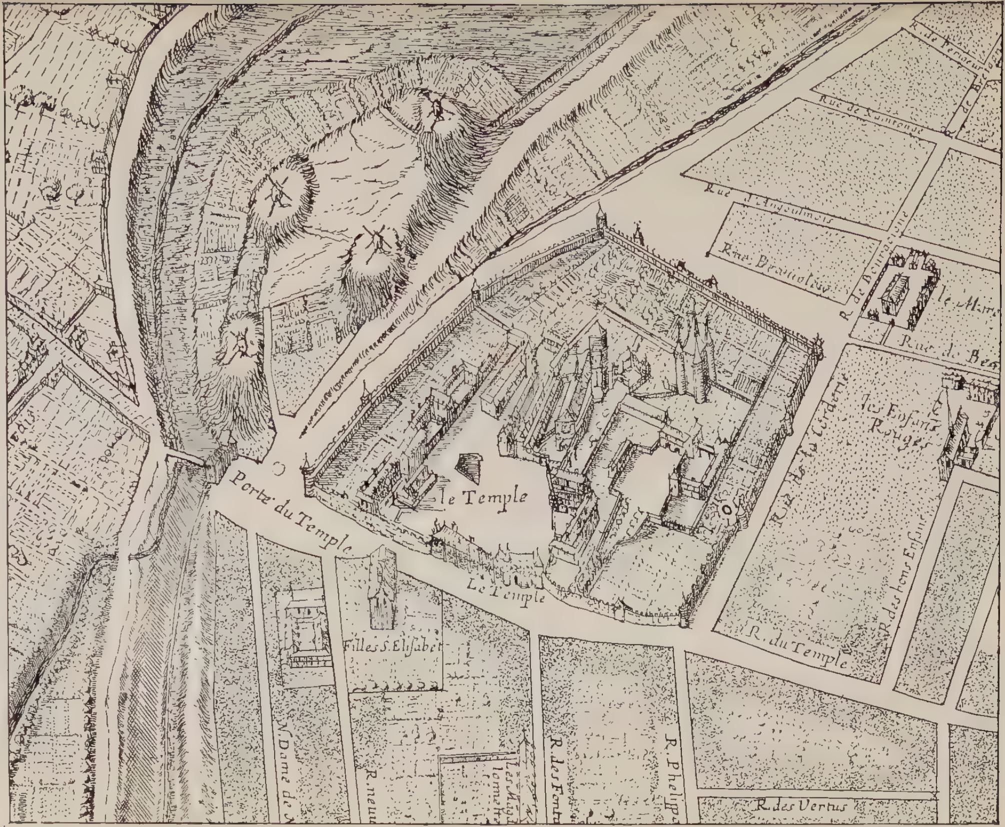
[1] The Ménilmontant of the 'Metro' of to-day.

[2] Even as in Malta to-day.


Rue de Xaintonge
Rue d'Angoulmois
Rue Brettoleire
R. de Beauiolois
Rue de Bea
les Enfans Rouges
Rue de la Corderie
R. des bons Enfans
R. du Temple
R. des Vertus
R. Phelipp
R. des Font
Les Mag lonnettes
R. neuu
N. Dame de N
Filles S. Elisabet
Le Temple
le Temple
Porte du Temple

LE MARAIS, 1652, SHOWING TEMPLE, BY GOMBOUST

To face p. 26.

The leases made to these tenants were sometimes sealed with the sign of the shop or establishment—le cygne, la pelle, etc.

The agricultural development of their lands in this way was only a very small part of the great work of social improvement and internal development done for France by the Order in their four hundred Commanderies, where a Knight Commander was responsible for the improvement of the property entrusted to him and subject in this respect to a quinquennial visitation by his superiors.

Transformations

In the rustic spots of the Marais on the north-east side of the city the Knights found places for summer residences. The citizens of Paris went there on Sundays and holidays to walk amid the fields and farmhouses and to admire the *jardins champêtres*. Soon this portion outside the city became more thickly inhabited and regular roads were traced amongst the ‘ courtilles ’ from which they took their names. For long, de Curzon tells us, the expenses of the Temple and of this garden city exceeded the receipts, but as the walls of the city were moved outwards and new suburbs were formed, and especially when, under Louis XIII, the lines of the grand Boulevards were traced, this local domain increased marvellously in value, of which fact the Order made good use.

The Marais was accordingly to suffer a transformation. A new source of revenue was found by the Order in the granting of building leases of these lands for long terms to Knights and noblemen for their mansions. The professional classes about the Parliament of Paris or the ‘ Châtelet ’ also sought to become favoured tenants.

Soon the simple farmsteads, the wind-mills, and the woods vanished before the scaffoldings of the contractor, and some of the famous ‘ anciens hôtels particuliers ’ came into existence, such as the hôtel du Connetable Duguesclin ; hôtel de Sainte Avoye ; hôtel de Montmorency and many others in the rue du Temple, of which the architectural beauties may still be seen.

The Crown itself rented land from the Order to build great administrations like the Intendance Générale or the Mont de Piété—all to the Order’s advantage.

Henri IV, 'grand embellisseur de Paris,' to further his schemes of town planning, entered into a contract with the Grand Prior of the Temple to acquire, for a large sum, a portion of the Marais which was still unenclosed, to establish there a new quarter of the city. The plans were passed by Sully, then 'Grand Voyer' of the city, and it was agreed that the Order was to retain its full seigneurial rights over the future inhabitants of the district.

The centre was to be known as La Place de France, a semicircular space, adorned with seven pavilions of three stories and flanked with towers. Between the pavilions were to open eight large streets to be called after the provinces of France.

This grandiose project failed to materialize in its original form owing to the death of the King, who was assassinated in 1610 in the neighbourhood of the Temple, in the rue de la Ferronerie. His successor, Louis XIII, however, brought into being the present Place des Voges and some of the most magnificent mansions in the Marais.

It might be interesting to discover whether Napoleon, and those who completed La Place de l'Arc de Triomphe, had in mind the seven pavilions and the radiating streets in the plans of the architect of Henri IV.

To the property already owned in Paris by the Order, or acquired by them from the Templars, in many quarters in or about the city, much was added in the centuries succeeding their occupation of the Temple. Pious donations accounted for valuable acquisitions. The vow of poverty taken by each Knight was also responsible for a continuous addition to the wealth of the Order: as each Knight died, his possessions passed to the Order, to be disposed of, according to the statutes, by the local Grand Prior. Such property naturally included land, and this could not, except by special permission from the Sacred Council, be alienated by the local Commanders. As a result of this accumulation of property it has been estimated that by the middle of the seventeenth century—the period, perhaps, of their greatest power—the Order had come to own, as a great ground-landlord, a very appreciable part of the property of Paris. One hundred and eighty-nine streets could be counted in different parts of the Capital—about the Temple, on the 'rive droite' or 'gauche', in the Université, and in the Cité itself—in which the Order owned or controlled much land and many houses.

Relations with other Religious Orders

Let us note further some of the remarkable organizations or persons who became at various periods tenants of the Temple.

We can see in some detail, in the records and leases, the religious impetus which was to make the city of Paris seem, to the sceptical minds of the later century of Voltaire, one large religious establishment—so numerous were its monasteries, convents, churches, and chapels.

'Came this day', writes Joinville in the year 1258, 'the Brethren called *Blancs-Manteaux*, asking the King to aid them to found a house in Paris. The King bought them a house and the old buildings around it to shelter them, by the old gate of the Temple. The Templars allowed them to build a church, a convent and a cemetery'. The King, Saint Louis, signed the deed undertaking to pay forty livres annually to the Temple for their privileges. 'Came another manner of Friars,' again writes the chronicler, 'also with crosses on their breasts,' and the Canons Regular of Sainte Croix are thus established as tenants of the Temple, giving their name to the 'Passage Sainte-Croix'.

One of the oldest tenancies of the Temple was that held by the Prior of the church of Saint Eloi, in the rue de la Calandre, in the Cité itself, entered into between this church and the Order of S. John in 1175. The Archbishop of Paris, in course of time, acquired this priory and paid in turn a tribute to the Temple. This tenancy lasted down to 1789—truly a payment running from time immemorial!

Countless other religious houses were tenants of the original Templars, and later of our Hospitallers, with no doubt reciprocal influences—such as the Monastery of Saint Maur in the rue des Barres; the nuns known as the Filles Dieu, likewise in this street; the Religieuses de Saint Gervais; the nuns of Notre Dame de la Charité 'dites des Billettes', in the rue des Billettes.

Charitable organizations of the laity, or foundations by individual donors, were also associated with the Grand Priory. The Confrérie de la Croissade were housed as tenants in the rue de la vieille Tissanderie from 1454, and prayed for the repose of the souls of deceased Hospitallers. The Grand Prior, to give another example, had the right of appointing six priests to enjoy the benefices of la Maison-Dieu, a building with chapel and living quarters, in the rue des Bouchers. This had been erected by a Sieur Ernoul, on condition that they should pray for the souls of the members of his family who were interred there, the contract, securing the annual rent, being signed by the Grand Prior in 1354.

The rue Francs-Bourgeois takes its name from the pious donation of a Sieur le Mazurier, who owned in it twenty-four small houses; these he presented in 1415 to the Temple on condition there be lodged within forty-eight poor persons who were to be excused by the Temple the taxes of 'voirie'—charges for the lighting, cleaning, and maintenance of the domain. These tenants came accordingly to be known as 'francs-bourgeois'.

Despite this pious bequest, this street obtained the reputation of a veritable 'coupe-gorge', and in the course of time, to end the evil, the almshouses were pulled down and the property annexed to the mansion of the great family of Bertrand, also tenants of the Temple.

Other almshouses under the patronage of the Grand Priory of France were the hôtel des Bonnes Femmes in the rue Barbette and some houses in the rue de l'Échelle, both founded by one Etienne Haudry, in 1306.

The rue des Enfants Rouges takes its name from a donation of Francis I, by which a foundling hospital was established in this street, under the tenancy of the Temple, the children wearing red dresses as the sign of charity. This existed down to 1777, when it was amalgamated with the Enfants Trouvés. At the corner, too, of the rue vieille du Temple stood seven almshouses and a 'Bureau des Pauvres', also tenancies of the Temple, where the indigent citizens found shelter and assistance, the inmates of the former being required to carry red and yellow crosses on their shoulders, adding a note of colour to this gloomy street.

Rural Domain

The rural domain of the Temple beyond the city boundaries also increased marvellously. The *censive* included farms or granges, lands for cattle or agriculture; vineyards with their wine-presses, quarries and woods supplying valuable materials in stone and timber for the buildings of the Order. These were situated in the environs of Paris—in the districts of the Seine, Seine-et-Oise, Seine-et-Marne as far as Oise, until the limits of neighbouring Commanderies were in turn reached.

Remains of these 'membres' of the Temple, as they were called, are found in the suburbs of Paris of to-day. Places bearing well-known names, such as Moisy le Temple; Moulin de Haut le Roy; Passy; Château de Mail were waste districts first brought into cultivation by the Order.

Distinctive features of the Paris of the Middle Ages and of the Renaissance were the buildings placed on the bridges over the Seine:—shops, houses, windmills, and even a chapel; and not a few of these curious erections belonged to the Order. They enjoyed, too, a quay on the river below the Louvre, a sort of custom-house of their own, through which their cargoes could come freely into Paris, as they did through the great ports of France.

The Bailli du Temple

The Grand Prior of France could not concern himself with the details of this vast property.

He was responsible through the Provincial Chapter over which he presided for the welfare, spiritual and social, of the Brethren and their dependents in the Commanderies, some fifty in number, of the Grand Priory.

He might be required to go in person to Rhodes or to Malta, to serve with the fleet or the army, or to attend at a General Chapter or at the Sacred Council, and he had to be in constant touch with his fellow Grand Priors of the five other Grand Priories in France in relation to their interests and, no doubt, he travelled to Provence and Auvergne to this end. When Paris developed socially and politically the Grand Prior was in a favourable position in the Temple to approach the King, the Court or the Parliament in the interests of the Order. He could confer, too, with the Ambassador from Malta who in many cases resided in the Temple.

The reader must think, therefore, of the Temple in a dual rôle, as the Headquarters of the Grand Priory of France, the centre of interest for all the French Knights, and in a subordinate way, as a simple Commandery with its urban and rural domain, of which the rich revenues were the personal enjoyment of the Grand Prior.

The Grand Prior, therefore, appointed a bailli for the local administration of the domain of the Temple. This official conducted in his name the tribunal of seigneurial justice before which came the vassals of the Order. He also defended the persons and property of the Order when they came into conflict with the courts of Church or State.

The Bailli of the Temple—or the 'Lieutenant of the Bailliage' as he was more correctly described—was, as may be imagined, a person of importance and consequence in the city of Paris, and through him were made the leases of the property. His personal staff, of Brethren or laymen, consisted of a 'procureur fiscal', a 'procureur au Parlement', and a 'procureur au châtelet', his 'chirurgien juré'; avocats and greffiers. He had his 'gens d'armes' and his 'sergents', his 'huissiers', an 'audiencier', and a 'priseur'. He could summon to his court in the maison du bailliage in the Enclos the tenants and vassals of the Order and do justice between them. He might order the Enclos to be closed against all outsiders, even the King's officers.

The Bailli swore fealty to the Grand Prior, and when the latter died, and pending the election of his successor, he administered the Priory.

Good Landlords

The relationship of the Order with their numerous tenants was friendly and advantageous to both. It counted much towards the political and social influence enjoyed by the Grand Prior. Rich and poor alike sought the patronage of an Order which, being a religious corporation, was not so rapacious as an individual landlord, and which, if they required their property to be kept in good order, gave peaceful and undisturbed possession and could give protection and fair dealing in their own courts of justice.

Noble families, who wished to reside in Paris when not in their provincial châteaux, were glad to become tenants of the Temple. Those seigneurs of ancient lineage who found their powers curtailed by the Absolute Monarch, in favour of the competing new nobility (bourgeois, as they considered it), which Louis XIV had brought into being about his Court, looked much to the Order. If out of power at Court, they could hope, as friends of the Grand Prior, for something for their sons in distinguished or lucrative employment in the Grand Priory, in the service of the Order at Malta itself, or in its embassies or missions abroad.

To the end, in these centuries of magnificence, humble people were still welcomed as tenants, even as an 'Agnes la buchère', and a 'Jean l'huilier', mentioned in the fourteenth-century leases: and the display by a tenant of the arms of Malta over a shop or a tavern gave immunity from many of the financial burdens and personal exactions which pressed upon the working classes in France until the Revolution.

The final exploitation of the domain of the Temple by the Order was found in the seventeenth century, when, as a profitable speculation, the Order undertook the erection of houses, large and small, to let or to lease to all sorts of persons within the walls of the Enclos.

It is now time to tell the readers something of the interior of this Enclos of the Temple, with its remarkable collection of buildings, religious and lay.

CHAPTER III

THE CHURCH AND BUILDINGS OF THE TEMPLE

The Enclos du Temple in 1789—*The Temple Church—Religious Services—A Brush with the Archbishop—The Cloisters—The Tower of the Temple*

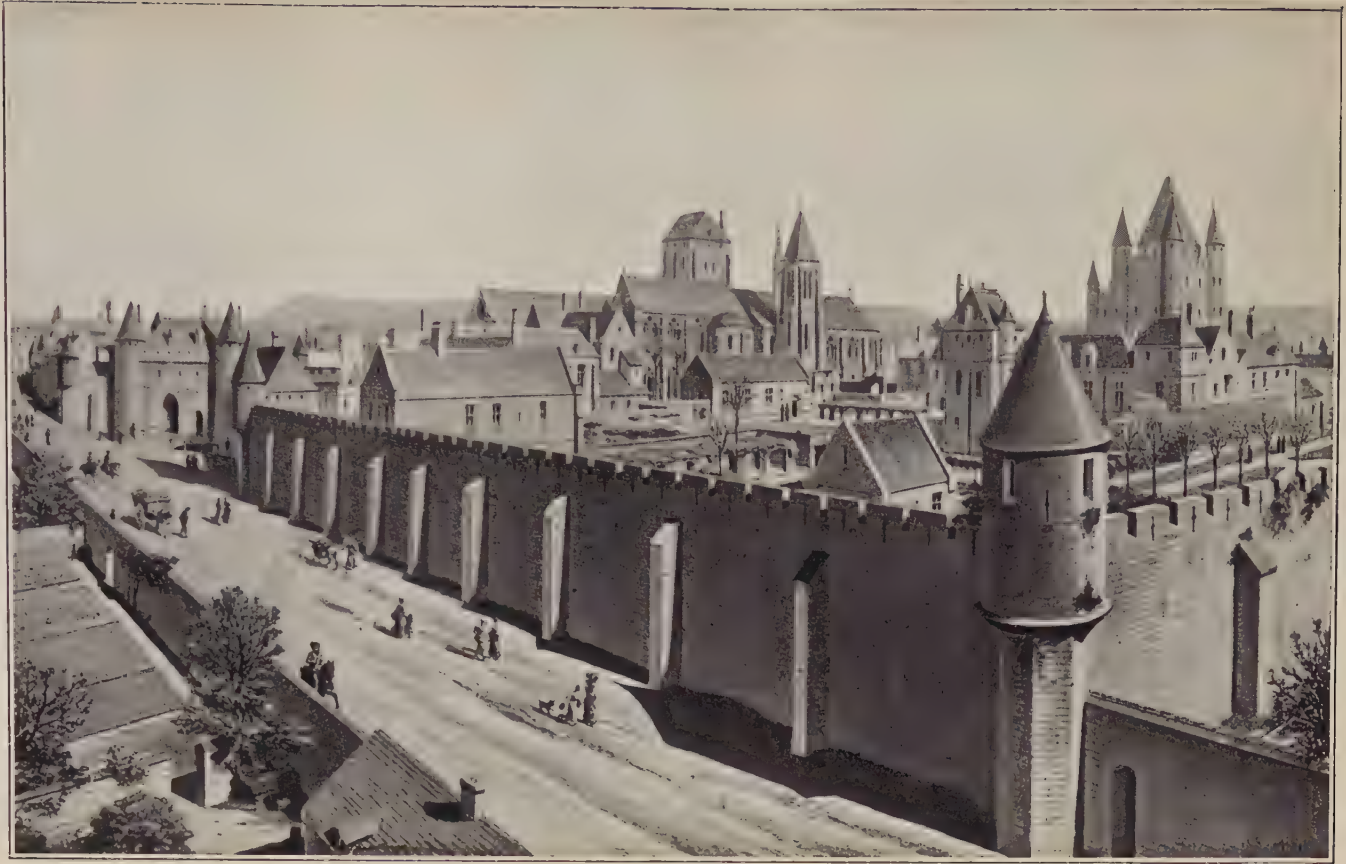
The Enclos du Temple in 1789

THE *Guide de l'Etranger à Paris* of the eighteenth century advised the traveller of its day not to miss seeing the wonders of the Temple. This did not predict the Revolution which was soon to sweep away every stone of the vast collection of historic and artistic buildings which formed in 1789 the Grand Priory of France.

The Enclos covered nearly thirty acres, and was in the form of an irregular quadrilateral, bounded by the four streets known as the rue du Temple, rue de la Vendôme, rue de la Cordière, and rue Charlot. The whole Priory was still surrounded by the original immense wall, twenty-five feet high, as in the times of the Templars, but this had been long unused for military purposes, and was broken at intervals by houses, shops, and other buildings incorporated in it, some of which fronted the streets mentioned. There were still visible remains of buttresses, ramparts, crenellations, corridors for troops along its length, and some of the forty watch-towers which had surmounted the wall.

Above this still impressive screen of stone, bleached in parts by the passage of centuries, had arisen a variety of architectural features, as the establishment of the Temple increased and the art of the builder developed. Looking upwards, one could see the plain Norman belfry with its peal of six bells, the latter the gift of a fifteenth-century Grand Master, d'Amboise; the more ornate spire and weather-vane of the gothic portion of the great church and the relatively modern mansard roofs and tall chimneys of the Prioral Palace.

Behind these buildings, against the sky, stood out the dark conical roof of the Donjon Tower with black-capped turrets at its four corners in sharp contrast with the whitened walls supporting them. This was, in fact, the famous Tour du Temple described by Pinaniol de la Force as 'the most solid building in all France'.



Reconstruction by Hoffbauer

Musée Carnavalet

WALLS OF THE TEMPLE, 1450

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Another building with red-tiled roof and whitened sides also appeared, of less importance but of equal size with the last. This was known as Cæsar's Tower and had fallen into decay.

The sole entrance to the Enclos was still through the great gate. The original 'bastide du Temple', as it was technically called, had existed from the beginnings down to the eighteenth century. It consisted of a principal gateway and a postern door, and was flanked by a tower on each side. There was a guardroom above the gate, and apertures for archers or musketeers in its walls. This fortified gate was approached from the street by a drawbridge over a moat. In 1733, this building was replaced by a large three-storied house, through which a gateway led into the main courtyard of the Enclos.

Within was found a veritable town within a town. Four thousand souls now dwelt inside the Enclos. There were some thirty small streets with their own proper names; shops and workrooms, open spaces, fountains, and public gardens, and all the signs of the civic and social activities of a small self-contained community over whom the Grand Prior still ruled as a grand seigneur.

The buildings jostled each other at various points, large and small, forming cul-de-sacs, alleys, archways, and passages, characteristic of the crowded growth of a small town in the days before the principles of town planning were applied. It was difficult to distinguish the conventual buildings proper from the hotels and smaller houses or sets of chambers occupied by noblemen, persons of fashion, or members of the learned professions, privileged by the Order, who had their residences there.

The courthouse, with an adjoining prison, was found by the entrance gate, and here the Bailli administered justice every Saturday afternoon at three o'clock.

Material proof of his jurisdiction might long have been seen in the 'échelle', or 'pilori avec carcan'—with bands for head and hands, and chains for the body of the malefactor—which stood without the walls at the corner of the rue des Vieilles Haudriettes. Here, too, the scaffold for execution of criminals had been erected when required.

The remains of the 'échelle' were seen as late as 1779, when it is mentioned (in the Dictionnaire de Paris of Hurtant et Magny)—a curiosity, not to be missed by the visitor who loved the gruesome.

The Temple Church

The historical focus, however, of the whole Enclos was the church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, under the title 'Sainte Marie du Temple'. This church had a circular nave, the 'rotonde du Temple', as it was always called, and this 'rotonde' formed, with possibly a small apse at the east side, all there was of a church in the beginning. It was built about 1140 when the Templars first came to Paris.

Like many others built by them, the church was modelled on that of Saint Sepulchre in Jerusalem, on a plan and in proportions not found elsewhere. It resembled the Temple Church in London, which has been considered the most beautiful of the remarkable churches with which the Templars marked their Western properties.

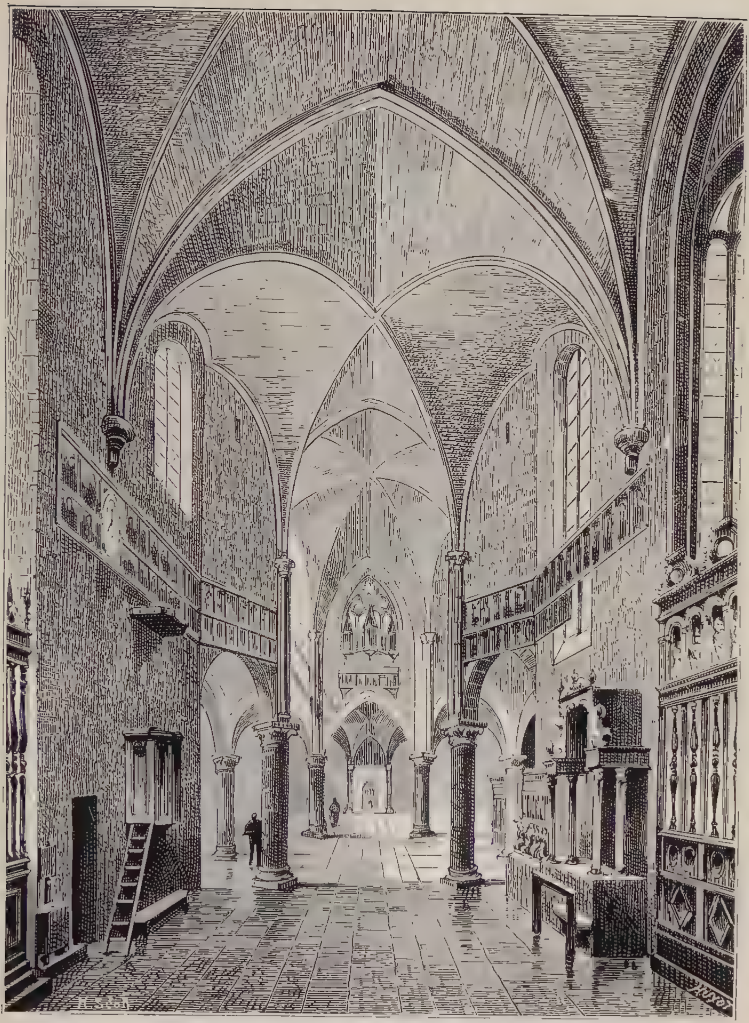
The church had grown by the year of the Revolution far beyond and about this circular construction by successive additions of another nave, a choir, an apse, six chapels, a sacristy, a belfry-tower, and a great porch by which the faithful now entered. The whole was surrounded on the north-west and south sides by buildings which marked the site of the original cloisters, and on the east side by the cemetery.

The Rotonde du Temple

The original 'rotonde', sixty feet in diameter, still retained the severe simplicity of the Middle Ages. The outer walls, of enormous thickness, were undecorated and divided by twelve pillars inside, and a corresponding number of contre-forts outside. Windows originally unglazed divided each pair of pillars.

Within, six massive pillars were disposed in a circle in the centre of the floor and formed a circular aisle. They supported arches from which sprang an 'umbrella vaulting', ending above in a cupola. The vault above was lighted by narrow unglazed windows. This 'rotonde' was now little used for religious services, and was sparsely furnished. The worshippers merely passed through it to the main body of the church. Yet here the antiquarian lingered in the shadows and silence of the great pillars to admire the Eastern influences in this Romanesque edifice or to note its measurements which by tradition held something cryptic or symbolic in them.

Viollet-le-duc has noted that the proportions of the 'rotonde' are those of an equilateral triangle imposed upon another



S. MARIE DU TEMPLE, SHOWING ROTUNDA

To face p. 36

inverted, and, without adducing any evidence, has given them a Masonic significance.

The Great Porch

The entrance to the 'rotonde' and the church was through a great porch built in the thirteenth century—to be seen in the engraving by Marot of the cloisters. It was a small but very precious part of the church from an architectural point of view. Its dispositions were curious and rare. Though narrow, it was higher than the roof of the 'rotonde' and largely obscured the view of the main body. The façade presented, above the entrance, a magnificent stained-glass window of four panels surmounted by a seven-rayed rose, and above this a tympanum with a small rose window, the whole flanked by two towers.

The sides of the porch were open to the light from ground to roof.

It was about twenty feet wide and thirty deep. In building it, the architect had certainly in mind the wonderful Sainte-Chapelle of Paris, for the whole was as finely worked and sculptured and was a beautiful piece of lace-work in stone. On the ground floor, the sides were broken by large bays, without glass, through which persons could pass.

Here stood a statue of S. Christopher. Tradition held that those who looked upon this saint's effigy were spared a sudden death on that day. This cult was very popular in France, and the statues, very large, were frequently placed in conspicuous places, such as a porch. They were suppressed[1] by the Bishops in the churches of France, but the Temple, being independent, kept its statue until the end.

On the first floor there was a compartment, lighted by windows of stained-glass panels with a rose similar to that in the façade, and, by a curious disposition, a window at the back looked down into the 'rotonde'. This compartment was reached by a winding stair in one of the towers. Its original purpose is not quite clear. The archives of the Grand Priory of France, a vast collection of papers of which some details will be given in a later chapter, were stored here in four great cupboards until a Visitation in 1664 directed that they be transferred to the Great Tower.

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[1] Vide De Curzon.

Nave and Choir

Let us pass through this porch and 'rotonde' and note something of the appearance which the main body of the church itself presented in its last phase.

The new nave and choir was, like the porch, of the thirteenth century. Pope Honorius III had, in a brief of 1217, recommended the faithful to contribute liberally to the erection.

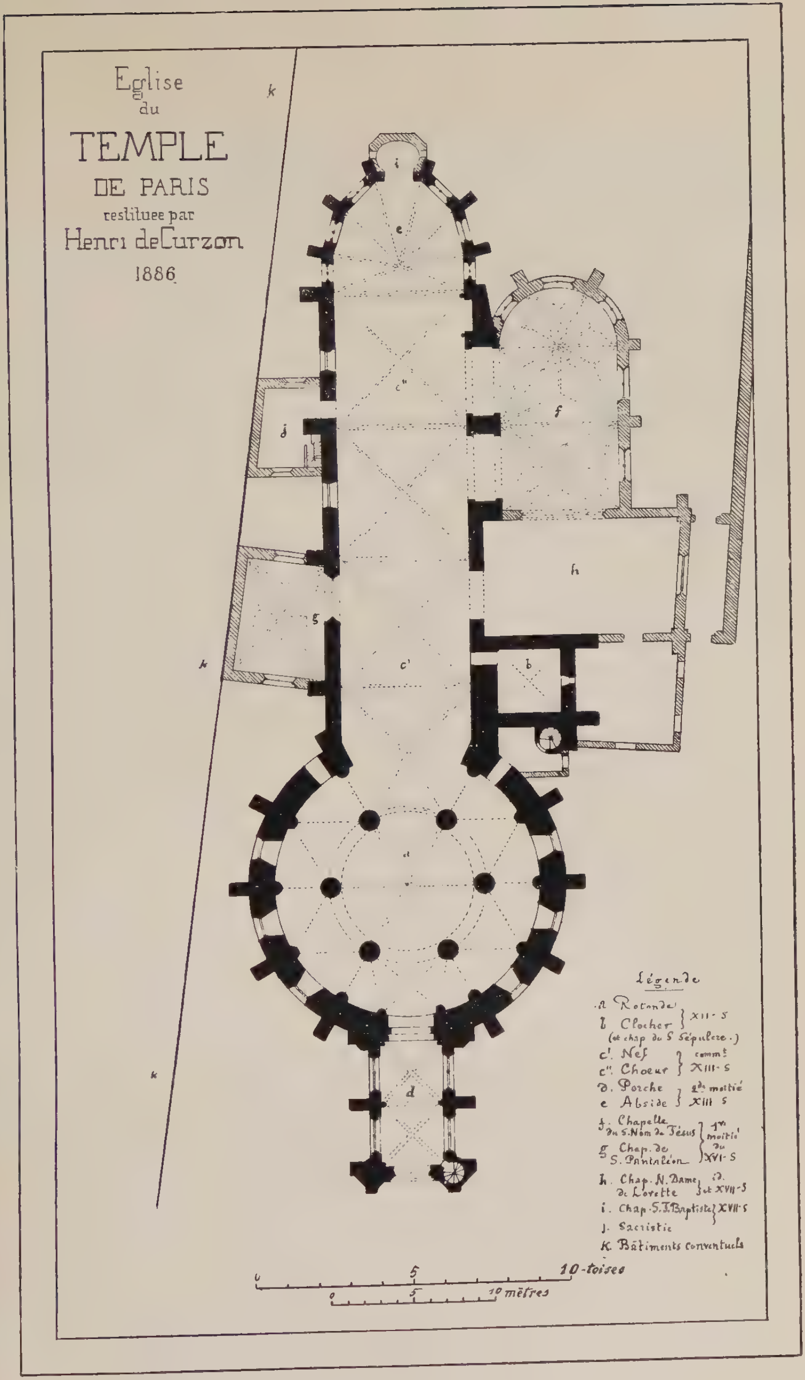
It was in gothic style, of the beautiful period of S. Louis which gave us the cathedral of Amiens and the Abbaye of S. Denis. Tall windows with pointed arches ran almost to the roof, and its length of some hundred feet was lost in the perspective of an apse, a chapel to S. John the Baptist, in which eight windows panelled with rare stained glass received the morning sun. There was neither an aisle nor transepts, but the sides opened into the chapels of S. Sepulchre, of Notre Dame de Lorette, and of the Saint Nom de Jésus on the right; and of S. Pantaleon on the left.

In 1789, the church was, indeed, a storehouse of ecclesiastical art and of many objects uniquely connected, as was natural, with the Order, but many pictures, altars, and other objects, had been removed, as worthless or worn out, and replaced following the changing tastes of the times. Some of these, a picture by Albert Dürer, or an ancient statue of Moses, may have been considered priceless to us to-day. The Visitations tell us pretty clearly the more modern transformations of the church.

A rood-screen of carved wood surmounted by a vast crucifix, with a small altar or credence on each side, divided the nave from the choir, but this in the year 1780, in one of the most ruthless renovations, had been replaced by a balustrade in marble.

The walls of the church and most of the chapels were still covered to a certain height with carved wood. Above this decoration were ranged a series of half-length portraits of the Grand Masters, who had ruled the Order from the beginning, and vacant places were marked in the side-chapels for their successors, destined never to be filled.

The high altar had long been a simple one of wood, with a large black ebony crucifix and six candles and a tabernacle of gilded wood; but this was changed in the eighteenth century for one in marble of the Roman style in the form of an antique tomb, much in vogue in France at the time. The


Eglise du TEMPLE DE PARIS restituee par Henri de Curzon 1886
k
i
e
c''
f
j
h
g
k
c'
b
a
d
k
Légende
a Rotonde
b Clocher } XII- S
(et chap du S Sépulcre.)
c'. Nef } commt XIII- S
c''. Choeur
d. Porche } 2de moitié XIII S
e Abside
f. Chapelle du S. Nom de Jésus } 1re moitié du XVI- S
g Chap. de S. Pantaléon
h. Chap. N. Dame de Lorette } id. et XVII-S
i. Chap. S. J. Baptiste } XVII-S
j. Sacristie
K. Bâtiments conventuels
0
5
10-toises
0
5
10 mètres

PLAN OF THE TEMPLE CHURCH

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body of a Virgin Martyr, from the catacombs of Rome, lay beneath it.

The decorator had long been at work with gold leaf and colours. The walls above the woodwork about the high altar and in the side-chapels were whitened and the woodwork itself gilded. A large lustre of crystal and four girandoles with candles lighted the choir. The rails of the high altar were of polished iron, and the chapels were divided off by grills. The objects of interest included a lectern of brass in the shape of an eagle supported by three lions and a great picture of the siege of Malta which hung behind the high altar, and one of S. Paul, the Patron of that Island.

By the altar was the Grand Prior's stall and the stalls of the Knights. These were hung on feast days with black velvet and green tapestries, given long ago by the Grand Master d'Amboise and Grand Prior Amador de la Porte.

The floors of the whole church were seen to be covered with hundreds of small simple plates of brass marking the tombs of the Knights and Clergy of the Order, and those of the laity who were given the privilege of such sepulture. These tombs were very numerous because all Knights who died in the subordinate Commanderies were brought for burial here, unless by concession to their wishes or those of their friends permission was given for it elsewhere.

When a Knight of the Langue de France died outside the Temple a Religious from the Grand Priory, accompanied by a 'huissier', sought the body at the residence, brought it to the local parish church and thence transported it to the Temple. The 'huissier' received the sword of the deceased and a pair of white gloves, and a small gratuity as his perquisites. The Knight was buried in his habit and it was forbidden to wear mourning for the deceased.

The Grand Priors were buried about the high altar or in certain of the side-chapels. If, however, the Grand Prior of France became Grand Master—as did many—a cenotaph was erected to his memory in the church and his heart was enclosed in it, the body being buried usually in the chef-lieu—in the Conventual Church in Rhodes, or in Malta.

Only a brief allusion will be made to the side-chapels. That of S. Sepulchre was the oldest, probably built by the Templars themselves, with the 'rotonde'. It was reputed to be made to the measure of the Holy Sepulchre itself at Jerusalem and, endowed with Papal indulgences, it was an object of devotion to the faithful from far and near. The pillars of the chapel were studded with nails said to resemble those used in the Crucifixion.

The religious fervour of the Grand Master Villiers de l'Isle Adam, the hero of the siege of Rhodes, caused to be built in 1527 the chapel of the Saint Nom de Jésus. A notable cenotaph in black and white marble enclosed the heart of this Grand Master, surmounted with a statue in alabaster depicting him on bended knees before Our Lord in the Jordan. In a remarkable picture of the 'Adoration of the Magi', attributed to Albrecht Dürer, this Grand Master was again shown appearing in red 'soubreveste' amongst the worshipping Kings. In 1780 this picture was replaced by a Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, by Suveé. The architecture of the whole chapel was in the rich style of flamboyant gothic. The roof was decorated in gold and blue, with flames of fire and a sword and the motto 'Pour Le Foy' repeated.

The Chapel of S. Pantaleon was likewise founded in 1527 by the Grand Prior du Cluys. A painting of unknown ancient origin depicted in many panels the miracles of the Saint. Here stood the baptismal font of the parish of the Temple.

The Chapel of Notre Dame de Lorette was associated with several 'bourgeois and maistres' of the city, who endowed it. A confraternity of its name, formed of laymen of the Enclos, assembled here. The chapel contained an ancient statue of the Blessed Virgin.

Individual altars, one to S. Claude and another to S. Nicolas, were placed in the 'rotonde'.

The Sacristy held a collection of vestments and altar plate in the purchase of which, as the accounts show, the Order had spent large sums. In an upper room, in the Sacristy, were kept the treasures of the Temple. Here was a great silver crucifix and chalices, and a picture of S. James, which the Grand Master Villiers de l'Isle Adam had brought with him from the Convent at Rhodes. The Reliquaries of the Church richly worked in gold and precious stones, held relics of the True Cross, of S. Anne and other Saints, including the Irish monk, S. Fiacre. Amongst the curious objects was a coin said to be one of the thirty pieces of silver for which Judas sold Our Lord.

Those interested will find further details of the interior in the Visitations of 1733–34–56–83–85 and 86.

Religious Services

The church and its services for the Order and for the laity were in the care of a Prieur-Curé, assisted by other conventual priests or chaplains. The religious activities were numerous.

Every day the complete canonical service was celebrated by the Prieur-Curé with High Mass, and on Thursday was added 'the office of the Blessed Sacrament with Benediction sung with the organ'.

Besides the ceremonies celebrated in the interior of the church, the Religious profited by the liberty of their Enclos to give a great 'éclat' to the processions on the feast of Corpus Christi. The last day of the Octave, being the most solemn, attracted an immense number of people. As well as the temporary altars erected by the inhabitants in the open air, there were tableaux vivants, taken from scenes of scripture, represented by children of the merchants of the Enclos.

Neighbouring parishes came, on certain days, to contribute to the solemnity of the feasts. At Easter, the clergy of S. Nicholas des Champs came in procession, singing the 'Regina coeli laetare'. On Rogation Monday came the clergy of S. Jean-en-Grève; on Tuesday those of Notre Dame de Bonne Nouvelle, and on Wednesday the Religious of S. Martin des Champs, dressed in black robes with long white rods in their hands.

On the eve of S. John the Baptist, the customary 'feux de joie' were piled in the 'grande cour', and the Prieur-Curé himself lighted them, surrounded by the Religious of the bailliage.

As in the time of the Templars, offerings for Masses continued to be numerous. The procès-verbaux of visits in 1733 and following years contain a descriptive list of these endowments.

These isolated Masses were said by Religious of the Order, but if the founder desired a daily Mass, he could bequeath a sufficient sum for the maintenance of a special chaplain. Perhaps for this reason, some isolated altars were erected in the nave; at all events these altars disappeared when by the magnificent donations of some Grand Priors, Villiers de l'Isle Adam, de Cluys, and others, the three large chapels of which we have spoken were constructed. Masses were said weekly for the repose of the souls of these past rulers of the Temple.

We must mention also the Confraternities which met in the church. The 'Confraternity of Devotion to Notre Dame de Lorette', of which Louis XIII was a member, celebrated its great feast on August 15, the feast of the Assumption of our Blessed Lady. After the demolition of the Church of the Temple, it was transferred to that of Notre Dame de Lorette in the neighbourhood. There were also the Confraternities of 'Toicturiers de Paris', with an altar to S. Anne; and of the 'Marchants Pains d'Épiciers', with an altar to S. Claude.

Independence of the Temple Church: A Brush with the Archbishop

Certain facts, mentioned by Barillet, show that the independence of the Church of the Temple was preserved up to the last day. Thus 'in the year 1787 the musicians of the capital having had difficulties put in their way by M. de Juigné, then Archbishop, on the occasion of the service which they wished to have celebrated for the repose of the soul of the illustrious chevalier Gluck, went to the Temple and there made the vaultings of the church vibrate with those melodious sounds which they had composed in honour of the greatest musician whom Germany had produced'.

'About the same time', continues this author, 'the Francs-Maçons had a High Mass sung there, with full choir, and on the following day they had a service celebrated for their confrères who had died in the preceding year. But as these ceremonies took place with closed doors and with the mystery which always accompanies the proceedings of the Francs-Maçons, it created some scandal. M. de Juigné complained of it to the Bailli de Crussol who replied that the church belonged to the Order and that he was only accountable to them for the use to which it was put; and that, besides, the glory of God having been observed before everything else, he had no reproaches to make himself in the matter. M. de Juigné thought well to be satisfied with this reply, and M. le Bailli de Crussol, having at heart the preservation of harmony between the clergy of France and the Order, thought well to refuse permission for the repetition of these ceremonies in the church of the Temple.'

The Hospitallers, in ecclesiastical matters, had always followed the Roman ritual. As in most of the churches in

Rome, the two Chanters carried silver batons during the divine service, one of these being surmounted by the figure of the Virgin and the other by that of S. John the Baptist.

The Cloisters

In the early centuries, cloisters, uniform with the thirteenth-century great porch, surrounded three sides of the church. The buildings adjoining this small area were at one time sufficient to provide lodgings for the Brethren and offices for the administration of the Priory.

The dwellings were then of a rigorous simplicity. Each Knight had a small room, a mere cell, opening upon a common corridor with a bed, a table and a chair. The serving Brothers lived in a dormitory. Here, too, were a chapter house, an infirmary, and a refectory, this last served with utensils of tin and earthenware. There were kitchens, sculleries and cellars, and a timber-store. The Prior, the Procureur, and the Receveur had each a room, a little better furnished than those of the ordinary Knights with a 'buffet à deux battants à clef', or large cupboard with shelves for official correspondence. The older records were stored in the compartment already described in the church, in four great presses, until they overflowed and had to be placed in chests in the kitchen. A Visitation in 1664 directed that all be transferred to the Great Tower, and the report of a later year describes the archivist effecting the change, working incessantly upon the task of marking and classifying this vast and growing collection.

As time passed, a growing comfort came into the cloisters. A storey was added above the arches, and the lodgings of the Knights increased to three rooms each with a little garden attached. The servants were more numerous. There were found a tavernier with his valet, a bouteiller, a cuisinier, a chambrière, a fontenier or turncock, a post of importance. The water supply to the Enclos was made by various conduits constructed by the Order, which were considered in their day wonders of engineering.

A part of the dormitory was in turn pulled down and more elaborate buildings—individual houses and sets of apartments with stone ornamentation—were erected. A special house was built for the Grand Prior.

The cloisters, however, retained to the end something of the primitive appearance of the times of the Templars.

The new houses were used by the increasing staff of the

Grand Prior—by his chancellor, vice-chancellor, chamberlain, and apothecary, until the greater hôtels came into being.

Worthy of mention were the official residences of the Grand Priors of Aquitaine and of Champagne, with their particular chapels, used by them when they attended provincial chapters in the Temple.

The Tower of the Temple

The Tower to the end known as the Donjon, or Great Tower, was the physical feature which dominated the Enclos. Its aspect in 1792 is well known to the readers of to-day from the many descriptions of the captivity in it of the unhappy Louis XVI and his family.

This massive feature of the domain had then stood undisturbed for nearly six centuries. Its original construction was so solid that, except for the roofing, there is no record in the Visitations of any extensive renovations or repairs in its long existence. An obscurity covers its beginnings. It is said to have been built in 1222 by Hubert, Treasurer of the Templars. But its end, under the hammers of workmen ordered by Napoleon to destroy it in 1808 as a place of hateful memories, is well known. It was four-sided, built of large square stones, and had a smaller tower at each corner. A moat and drawbridge had originally protected it. The interior four storeys were richly ornamented with vaultings and carved stone, a unique feature being the single large gothic pillar in the middle of the floor which supported the roof of the first storey. This first storey, a great hall, was used as their Chapter House both by the Templars and by the Knights of S. John. In a later century the Order of S. John built a separate Chapter House, adjoining the Cour du Bailliage.

This Great Tower appears in the chronicles of Matthew of Paris, of Froissart and of Monstrellet, and in other writings in a variety of associations. It served by arrangement with the Order at one time or other as the depository of Royal Treasures and Charters of France, it was used as an arsenal and powder store under the great Sully and as barracks by various troops, such as the archers de la ville, the Suisses and the 'lansquenets'; its walls formed a Prison of State, and its records tell many a tale of terror—of Jean de Montreuil murdered here or Ylonde de Flandres imprisoned.

To the end, the Great Tower kept its grim appearance. Legend tells us that Marie Antoinette openly expressed her aversion to it and frequently begged the Comte d'Artois when he was her host in the Temple to pull it down—an unconscious presage of the fateful part this stronghold was to play in the life of this Queen.

Mention must be made of the Little Tower which adjoined the Donjon and was, even to the small towers—though only two—at the corners, an exact model of it. In appearance it was as though it had grown out of one of the walls of the larger edifice. It afforded access to the Donjon through doors of iron and oak. A gallery connected it with the Palace of the Grand Prior, and it contained a miniature chapel. This Little Tower was, in 1789, the official residence of the Archivist of the Order.

CHAPTER IV

SOME OF THE CONTENTS OF THE ARCHIVES OF THE TEMPLE

Contents of the Archives—La Fête du Temple—The Visitations—Maps and Plans—Writings of the Knights—A Fashionable Historian—In Lighter Vein—The Seals

WITH the conveyance of the Temple to the Order of S. John, came naturally the archives of the suppressed Order of Templars to be added to those, many and ancient, of the Order of S. John. These covered valuable deeds; parchments of but a single sheet, a few inches square, with diminutive seals—parchments whose faded gothic characters conveyed immense grants of land and châteaux in feudal France, from which large revenues were drawn.

Numerous as such deeds were, however, they were by no means complete. It is surmised, indeed, from the relative paucity of documentary evidence concerning the foundation of the Temple Church, and other possessions of the Templars in France, that the members of that Order, on their suppression, deliberately destroyed or hid, in blind protest, their more important Title Deeds.

Of more interest to the readers of this recital, were the archives of the Order of S. John itself, stored, in 1789, with those of the Templars, on two floors of the Great Tower of the Temple. These included copies of diplomas and letters from the Kings of the transient Christian Kingdom of Jerusalem, and from the Princes of Antioch, in favour of the Order; Papal Bulls expressing approval of, and indicating the growth of, the Order; repeated appeals from the Holy See to Christian Kingdoms to save the Island of Rhodes, which was so heroically held by the Order from 1310 to 1522, when, during the Grand Mastership of Villiers de l'Isle Adam, they were expelled by the Turks; letters from the Holy See to the faithful, urging them to give the Order abundant funds for the recovery of the lost places of the Holy Land; fresh appeals to the faithful for the succour of the Order, again hard pressed in their new stronghold of Malta, during the great siege of 1565, at which time the Grand Master was again a French

Knight, Jean de la Vallette; and the usual renewal by each Pope, on his elevation to the Holy See, of his predecessor's full recognition of the Order.

Here, too, were stored 'for reference', communications from the Headquarters of the Order itself, with a complete set of the Briefs of the Grand Masters from 1311 to 1785; Statutes and Ordinances issued by the Grand Master affecting the members of the Order in the Grand Priory of France; decisions of the Grand Masters on matters of difficulty submitted to him; reports—favourable and otherwise—of the official visitors from Malta to the Grand Priory to inspect the local organization; notifications of the appointment or withdrawal of Ambassadors; new regulations regarding service in the galleys; reports from Commissioners of the Novices in Malta to their own Grand Priors regarding the progress of Knights under their jurisdiction; 'transfers, promotions, and relinquishments'; grateful thanks for the munificent gifts of the wealthier French Knights to the Treasury at Malta.

Here, too, were the registers of all the Chapter Meetings of the Priory of France, twenty-eight volumes of them, bound in green bazane, with the eagles of the Priory and the personal arms of each Grand Prior on the cover. These registers were kept from 1355 to 1792, and from them could be gathered many interesting details of the Provincial Assemblies which were held several times a year in the Temple.

Description of La Fête du Temple

The most important of these assemblies was that held on June 11, S. Barnabas' Day, which was locally known as the day of *La Fête du Temple.* For fifteen days the enclosure was a scene of crowded activity, in as much as all the local Knight Commanders, forty or fifty of them, with their retainers, were under an obligation to attend, and the resources of the Temple, in housing and catering, were taxed to the utmost.

The proceedings were conducted with all the solemnity prescribed by the Statutes. They began with a Roll Call, and the payment of 'Responsions', which sums were handed to the Grand Prior by each Knight Commander in a purse as his Commandery's donation, generally fixed at one-third of the revenue, to the Treasury of the Order at Malta. Then followed the celebration of the Mass of the Holy Ghost, sung by the Prior of the Church of the Temple, after which the

Brethren returned in procession to the Chapter Hall adjoining, where the Gospel, the *Veni Creator*, and other appointed prayers were sung or said. It was customary to invite a distinguished ecclesiastic of some other Order to preach the sermon then delivered.

The proceedings ended with a sumptuous repast, after which, an old Register records, 'nothing else was done for that day'.

On the next day the Knights, with lighted candles in their hands, heard Mass for their departed comrades and then proceeded to the Chapter Hall, each to his own appointed stall, where the routine and real business of the Assembly was formally opened by the reading of the Magistral Bull—sealed with black wax—from the Grand Master at Malta to the presiding Grand Prior.

The Grand Prior then brought to the notice of the assembly the latest communications from Malta on matters of religion and discipline within the Grand Priory, the policy to be followed in relation to the ecclesiastical and civil authorities of France, new appointments to high offices, and other such aspects of community life on which the Grand Master was the supreme authority.

The local applications for admission of new candidates were confirmed or rejected, upon hearing the reports of the special Commissioners of Admission, and the decisions were duly forwarded to Malta; appointments in the giving of the Grand Prior were announced; grievances were listened to, and sometimes redressed; holidays and leave of absence were granted, and reports from the various Commanderies in the Grand Priory were read.

A Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor, whose duty was to register formally the decrees, were in attendance with a staff of *greffiers* and *huissiers*, and often the presence is recorded of the official Visitors from Malta and other distinguished persons. At one of these assemblies, in 1604, the Registers tell of the particularly magnificent function, at which Henry IV and his Court were present, when his natural son, Alexander de Vendome, was received into the Order.

When the Assembly concluded, the Knights Commander returned to their duties in their own Commanderies, some nearby as that of S. John de Latran across the Seine or that at Neuilly; others to places many days' journey distant, where, reinforced in their authority by recent contact with the great ones of the Order and its friends at Court, whom they would have met at the Temple or at Versailles, they took up anew the task of local government.

The Visitations of Commanderies

The administration of the Knight Commander was scrutinised very closely by the Visitors sent down by the Grand Prior on periodic inspections.

Their reports upon the Commandery, as recorded in these old documents, included minute details concerning the state of its church and buildings, the regularity with which the Priest of Obedience had conducted the Divine Office and celebrated Mass, and the good conduct or otherwise of the Brethren; inventories of the library books, the silver, pictures, relics and church equipment generally; accounts of revenues received locally, from rents or donations, and of payments made for the maintenance of buildings, arms, habiliments, and other necessaries for the Brethren, and of the heavy expenses incurred in the employment of the large staff of foresters, stewards, janitors, cooks, bakers, woodreeves, valets, horse-boys, brewers, cellarers, washer-women, swineherds, oxherds, shepherds, carters, and page-boys, all of whom were deemed essential to the establishment and had their 'commons' at its table.

The responsibilities of the local Knight Commander, it will be seen, were infinite and varied. The wide range of subjects embraced such prosaic tasks as the clearing of woods and lands, and the more enlivening matters of disciplinary action upon refractory Knights—or, as an old Ordinance expressed it, upon 'rambling Brethren', punitive expeditions against bandits in lonely districts where the Convent of S. John was perhaps the sole centre of civil life and culture; disputes with local secular clergy as to tithes, or with the King's officers as to revenues; and the constantly recurring problem of succouring the people in districts ravaged by famine, plague, or the devastations of a feudal lord.

If the Visitors were satisfied with the condition of the Commandery under these many heads, the favourable report which ensued invariably led to the Knight Commander's transfer, when a suitable vacancy occurred, to a richer Commandery.

The extraordinary value of these reports and the thoroughness of the inspection can only be estimated by their actual perusal. The subjects and painters of the pictures in the château, the kind of wall-paper decorating the *salon*, the names of tenants, the price obtained for the crops, some note on a curious style of planting trees, the bad treatment of unpaid servants, the state of the herd's house, are some of the details of the social and economic life recorded in the Visitation of a Commandery in 1765. They give a first-hand picture of the times.

Nearly all we can know of the Temple comes from these official records.

Maps and Plans

The archives also included manuscript maps and plans of the lands and houses of the Temple and other dependencies of the Grand Priory of France and of projects of new buildings and extensions, some of which never got beyond the parchment or paper on which they were traced, such as the project already described of King Henri Quatre.

Writings of the Knights

Among the miscellaneous records in the Temple were the prodigious manuscripts amassed at various times by deceased members for great histories of the Order.

Each Grand Master had encouraged industrious historiographers to perpetuate the fame of the Order to which they belonged, and an immense literary output, from the pens of individual Knights and others interested in the Order, grew with the centuries. This included histories of the Order, narrations of exploits, treatises on privileges and duties of its members, recondite tractates on matters of ceremonial, the principles of nobility, and a number of other curious subjects to-day of only antiquarian interest—written in Latin, or in the native language of the writers. Some of these appeared in printed books or pamphlets, which often reached many editions and passed into translations. Others never got beyond manuscript form in the lifetime of their compilers and rested in the Archives in the Grand Priories, or at Malta, whither the writers had forwarded them for the consideration of their superiors, and only reached print in the publications of learned societies of another age.[1]

A French Knight, for instance, the Chevalier F. Jacques Batard de Bourbon, who had taken part in the defence of

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[1] The *History of Malta*, by Boisgelin, contains a valuable list of many of them. Hellwald's catalogue, less accessible to the ordinary reader, is, of course, the standard bibliography of the Order. A supplement has recently been added to it.

Rhodes, published in Paris in 1526 *La grande et merveilleuse oppugnation de la noble cité de Rhodes ;* the letters of the Prior of the Conventual Church in Malta were published in Paris in 1565 in a book entitled *Vrai discours de la guerre et siège de Malthe par les Turcs* ; and the Chevalier Nicolas Durand, Commandeur de Villegagnon, described in 1542 the expeditions of the galleys of the Order on the North African coasts.

The Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres included in their transactions of the day a communication by M. de Sausseure entitled : 'Memoire sur l'Attentat commis par une partie des Chevaliers de l'Ordre de Malthe contre le Grand Maître la Cassière', an event of a turbulent time in 1581, when three officers of the Inquisition with some French Knights were accused of attempting to poison the Grand Master. A rebellion ensued, the Grand Master was forcibly imprisoned in the Fort S. Angelo and was only restored to his authority by the intervention of the Pope, who summoned all the parties to Rome.

Those curious to follow the elaborate Court etiquette of other days will be interested in the *Relation du cérémonial qui s'est pratiqué le jour de l'Audience donnée par Sa Majesté très Chrétienne*, by the Bailli de Mesmes, Ambassador of the Order to the King of France.

In the time of Louis XIII, a Chevalier de Moncal was adventurous enough, for some reason or other, to suggest the union of the Grand Mastership of Malta and the Order with the Crown of France, and this pamphlet was replied to with vigour in another entitled *Malthe suppliante aux pieds du Roi contre l'auteur de l'Abregé des Mémoires pour la Réunion*. A deputation of French Knights was got together and waited upon the King, and their persuasions prevailed against the project and the proposal was dropped.

Amongst works on the religious life of the Order appeared various Lives of Raymond du Puy; *Martyrologies of Malta*, giving particulars of the Knights who fell in the siege of Malta with their arms emblazoned in the pages; also lives of saintly Sisters of the Order, such as *La bienheureuse Vierge Fleur Religieuse de S. Jean* (Paris 1625), or of *La Mère Galiotte de Genouillac*, described as *Réformatrice des Religieuses de l'Ordre en France* (Paris 1633), by le Père Thomas d'Aquin.

A Fashionable Historian

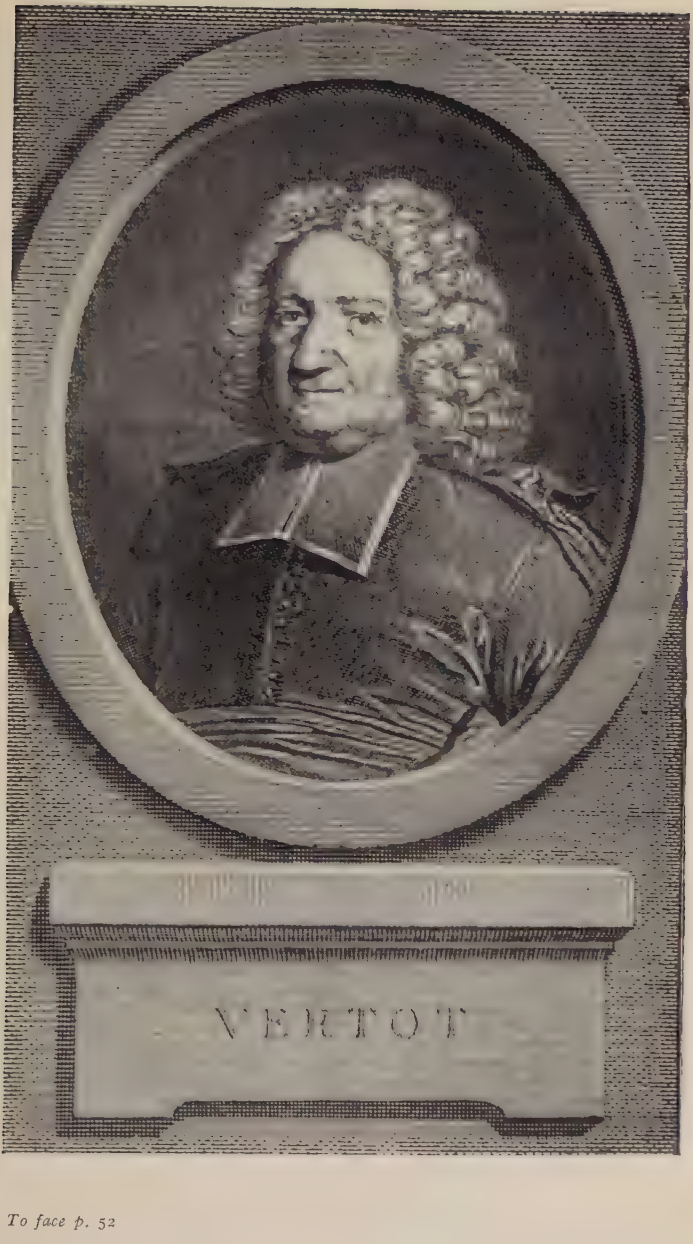
A literary event of importance for our subject marked the beginning of the eighteenth century. The famous Abbé de Vertot was asked, as the fashionable historian of his day, to write the annals of the whole Order.

René Aubert de Vertot was born in the château de Benetot in Caux and was allied to many noble families of Normandy. He was educated by the Jesuits of Rouen, whence he entered the Capuchins at Argentan and later the Premonstratensians at Valsery, but owing to his habitual ill-health, he was advised by his physicians to leave the Regular Orders. Vertot, therefore, sought a retreat as a simple country priest in the hamlet of Croissy la Garrenne near Marly. He also was made Prior of Joyenval and Abbé Commandataire of Auboent, offices of emolument to which his great connections presented him, for his brother was 'chambellan' to Monsieur the brother of Louis XIV. From Marly he became a curé in Rouen where he had been a schoolboy, and there he passed many years, free, rich, and content, spending his large income in the purchase of books and in literary activities.

He first achieved a world-wide fame by his work on the Conspiracies of Portugal which went through many editions and translations—a singular subject for a mild and benevolent priest. He was the friend of persons as divers as Mlle de Launay and Bossuet. The Kings of England, Sweden, and Spain asked him to write the histories of their countries. The Academy honoured him by making him a member, but his love of retirement prompted him to ask to be excused the delivery of the customary address.

The history of the Knights of Malta, completed in four volumes in 1726 and dedicated to the Grand Master Vilhena, is, perhaps, Vertot's best known work. It was embellished, in the first octavo edition, with great engravings of the Grand Masters and celebrities of the Order and with maps and plans of Malta. It appeared in fresh editions in duodecimo in Paris in 1761 and 1772. Editions in English appeared in London in 1763 and at Edinburgh in 1770, with the original engravings, the titles in French being retained.

His work presented, as he tells us in the preface, immense difficulties: 'To look back into ages six hundred years distant from the writer, to trace, in times remote, only the faint glimmerings of a dark original which will not give satisfaction to



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the reader's curiosity'. He conceives the outward duty of the Order to have been 'to defend the altars and estates of Christendom and to secure to Christians the liberty of navigation' and inwardly to preserve justice and unity, peace and piety. The strict bounds of the hospital, with its limitations of a careful attendance upon the sick and poor, were to be passed only to enter the church or to take up arms against the barbarians.

As a scientific historian, he dismisses from his records 'some surprising accounts, which are to be met in the annals of the Order, in particular the conversion of Ismeria, a Saracen princess of most exquisite beauty, as were all the heroines in the ancient chronicles, whom the old writers had conveyed in one night from Egypt to Picardy in company with three Knights of the Order, who were all of them brothers, and had each a great share in the lady's conversion; a pious fable', he remarks, 'which may justly deserve to be rejected with the rest of the old legendary stories, rather calculated to raise the mirth of libertines than to promote the edification of pious and well-disposed persons!'

He recognizes, too, that the golden age of the Order may have gone. But he makes a claim on its behalf. 'The like spirit of disinterestedness and zeal,' he declares, 'the like purity of manners and intrepidity was never kept up through so long a succession of so many ages in any one of the military Orders, nor has there been any Order where luxury and an over-earnest pursuit after wealth and pleasures have obtained so late an admission.'

In the course of his labours, Vertot was beset by many persons who, with or without substantial claims, wished him to include the names of their ancestors in the list of the valiant defenders of Malta at the great siege. Worn out by the applications for historical honours, he refused to consider any further importunities with the famous bon mot '*Mon siège est fait*'.

The publication of this monumental work naturally produced much controversy. In Malta it was received with some hostility and a special commission was appointed by the Sacred Council to examine it. Probably with Vertot's history in mind, the next Chapter General of the whole Order, in 1775, re-enacted the old statute that no member of the Order should publish in print anything touching the Order save with permission of his superiors.

This veteran historian at the close of his days enjoyed the pleasant post of ‘ Secretaire Interprète ’ to the Duc d’ Orleans and ‘ Secretaire des Commandements ’ of his consort, the Princesse de Bade. The Abbé was then installed in the Palais Royal, where he died in 1735, aged eighty years.

In Lighter Vein

Nor was a human touch wanting in the documents preserved in the Temple. There was, for instance, the troublesome question of the demand of the roué, du Barry, brother of the favourite of Louis XV, to be given the Cross of the Order. The King supported this demand by a letter to the Ambassador, the Bailli de Fleury, under his own hand. Despite this fact the Bailli, by dilatory tactics, cleverly arranged that the request took so long to reach Malta that the unhappy Monarch died without receiving a reply, and the applicant heard nothing more of the matter. Thus was a public scandal averted.

The letter-books of the Bailli de Fleury revealed, indeed, a man of singular diplomacy, and within their red-morocco-bound pages were to be seen wise counsels to a young brother Knight from the Temple, on his first appointment to the Embassy of the Order in Spain. This advice covered matters of precedence, the etiquette of making formal calls on local Grandees, modes of epistolary address, and even instruction in the gentle art, when occasion required, of being ‘ not at home ’ !

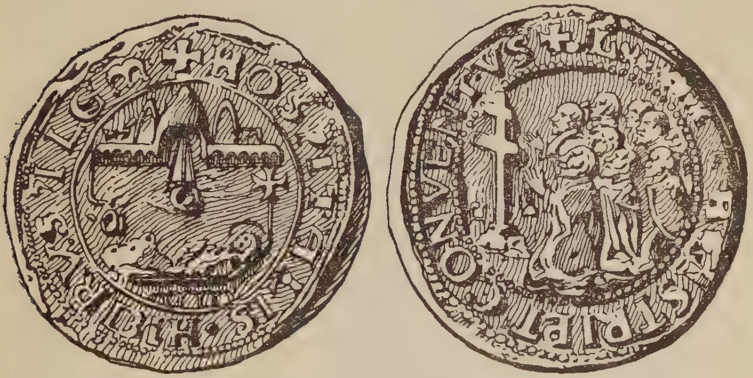
Fugitive touches appeared here and there in the records which must have amused or baffled the Archivist of the day: there was a rough sketch of a dancing girl with her admiring courtier, idly scrawled on the back of a large seventeenth-century title deed, doubtless done by some clerk enraptured by the latest star at the neighbouring Théâtre du Marais, in the rue Vieille du Temple ; in more serious vein, there was also a curious cryptogram seemingly on the destiny of the Order yet of little meaning to other than its author; there were cipher messages to which the key was missing, and other meaningless scribblings of persons whose thoughts have long vanished with them.

The Seals

The seal of the Grand Priory of France, of which we have numerous examples, was an eagle with extended wings between two crowned fleurs-de-lys. It was called the ‘ scel à l’aigle ’ and was kept in the Treasury of the Temple Church, locked away with three keys which were kept by the Grand Prior and two principal Commanders. The Grand Prior added this eagle to his personal arms.

We must not forget the seals of the Order in general—of the 'Magister et Conventus'. They figured, principally, a number of Knights kneeling before a double Cross; or a figure of Christ lying in a sepulchre, under a roof of Moorish architecture from which hung a lamp.

Such were the symbols proper to an Order which was at the same time militant and hospitaller.



SEALS OF THE ORDER: FROM COLLECTION AT S. JOHN'S GATE

CHAPTER V

SOCIAL LIFE IN THE 'ENCLOS' IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Social Changes—Voltaire's Epigram—Other Famous Habitués—A Beautiful Palace—The Stars go out—Routine goes on

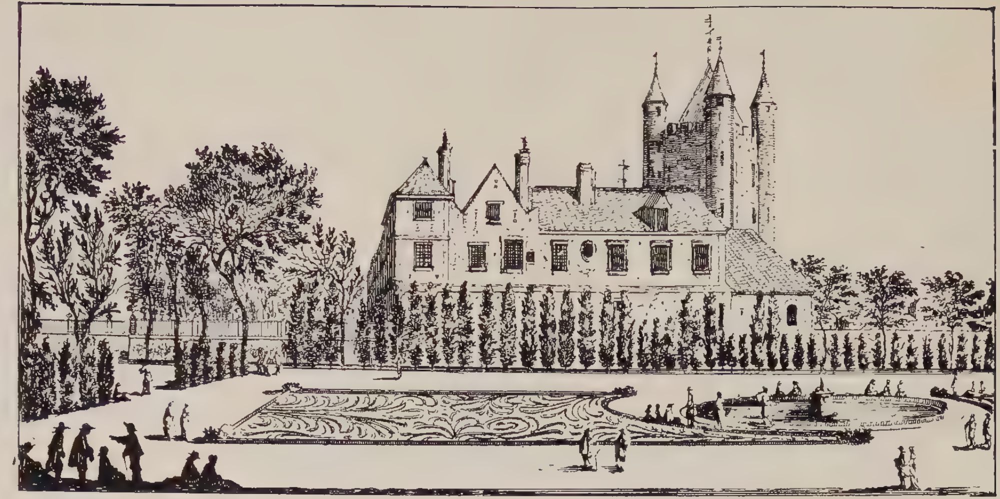
BY 1789 military activities were but a distant memory in the Enclos. Amadore de la Porte, who died in 1644, was the last Grand Prior of France to fight under the banner of the Order in any major operations against the Turkish forces. His epitaph in the Temple Church recorded in great detail his deeds of prowess; and it may still be read in the work of Piganiol de la Force.

An Order, bound by monastic vows and at the same time trained to fight, was no longer an international need. The martial energies of the young French Knights were henceforth given rather to the service of France as in the case of the famous Bailli de Suffren and the Maréchal de Boufflers.

A social change had also come into the Order. For more than two centuries the vow of poverty had been modified by legal concessions. The Knights were allowed to enjoy, in their lifetime, the revenues of their Commanderies and the income of their personal property. They were allowed to charge the latter in favour of their creditors and others after their death, as their wills testify. The Knights could, therefore, maintain great establishments and play a high social rôle.

For France itself with the opening of the seventeenth century there had come a period of internal peace and prosperity.

The social life of Paris was transformed. The intellectuals were wearied with the civil strife and destruction of the late wars of religion, and were shocked by the social tone set at Court and elsewhere by the soldiers returned from victory. So in 1610, the Marquise de Rambouillet attracted to her great hôtel in the rue S. Thomas du Louvre a fashionable circle who sought escape from the vulgarities and coarseness of life in the refining activities of art, music, and letters. Thus began the famous Salons of Mlle de Scudéry, Mme Scarron, Mme de la Fayette, Mme de Sevigné and others, which fostered and inspired many of the great French writers—passing from the preciosity of one century to the philosophy of



The Temple, Paris *Drawing by Sylvestre*, 1650

PALACE AND GARDEN OF THE GRAND PRIOR OF FRANCE, 1650

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the next. The Academy founded in 1634 by Louis XIII also opened an avenue to a more intellectual outlook on life and to the liberal arts.

The Temple in its last epoch reflected these tendencies. Voltaire called it the 'Temple of Good Taste' in a stanza to his friend the Abbé Chaulieu, who resided there, and named the Abbé, who was himself a poet and wit, the 'Anacreon of the Temple'.

A succession of Grand Priors, including Hugues de Rabutin de Bussy Lavaulx, Philippe de Vendôme, the Chevalier d'Orleans and the Prince de Bourbon Conti, emulated one another in their magnificent entertainments in the Temple, in the distinction of their guests and in their patronage of art and letters. An invasion, too, was made by the fashionable world of Paris, who took leases of the great hôtels already mentioned, which now filled the Enclos. Friends and flatterers from outside crowded to their receptions, and coaches and sedan-chairs, footmen, and torch-bearers waited in the courtyards until the morning sun touched the gilded globe of the belfry of the Temple Church.

Notable amongst these fashionable residents was the Comte Roger de Bussy Rabutin, a nephew of a Grand Prior, who maintained a great house and entertained lavishly, when not at the wars, in the Bastille, or in exile for his *Histoire Amoureuse des Gaules* and similar writings. Madame de Sevigné describes in a letter to her friend, the Marquise d'Uxelles, a great fête this soldier gave in 1653 in the garden of his uncle's palace, a *nuit galante*, with illuminations, an open-air comedy and an orchestra of twenty-four violins.

At this time Madame de Sevigné was living in her house in the Boulevard S. Germain, and near her were her great friends the Abbé Coulanges and his sister Mlle Coulanges, with whom she had been brought up and whom she visited constantly.

A day came when the Abbé and Mlle Coulanges departed for the Temple, having obtained a house with a garden on the Grand Cour of the Enclos. Madame de Sevigné was desolate. She missed the daily visits and 'the long chats, over cups of coffee after Mass', with her friends. The Temple across the river was too far away to reach with comfort, and correspondence, even for such a letter-writer, was a poor substitute.

So in 1677 Madame de Sevigné, too, had perforce to follow the fashion and cross the river, to take the Carnavalet hôtel in the Marais nearby. But she never seemed to like the Temple. She knew the real countryside, Brittany in her childhood, and Provence where in the end she died, and the growing artificialities of life in the Enclos may have oppressed her. 'It is but a false countryside,' she exclaimed, in a letter of 1691 to the Abbé Coulanges. She hated this 'lovely view' and that 'rustic spot' which were so unreal—where 'the fresh charms of spring were considered by fashionable society as the horrors of winter'!

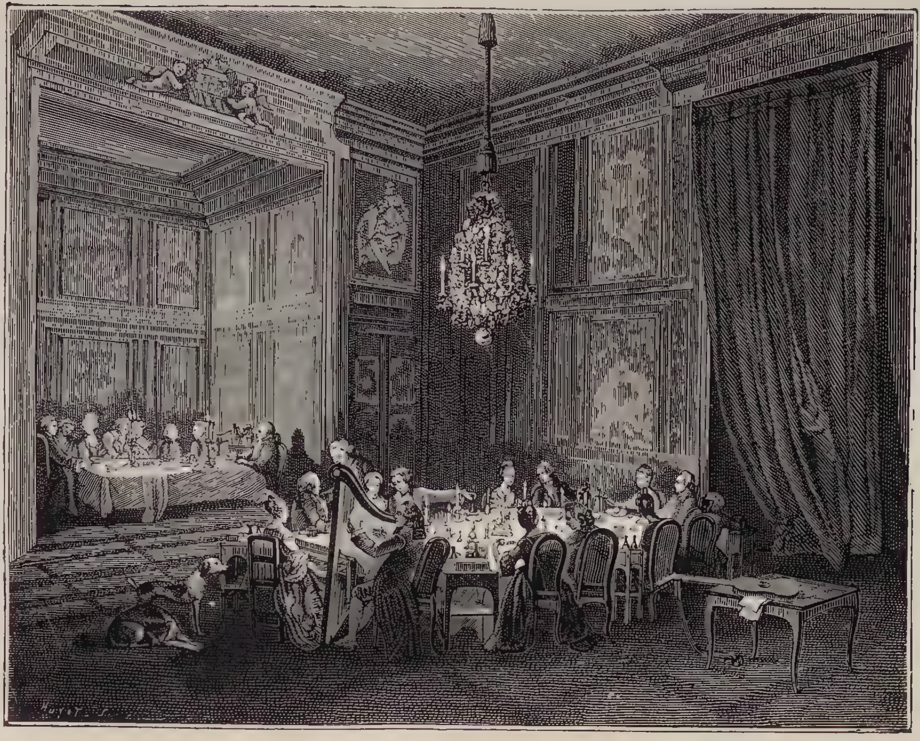
The appointment, indeed, in 1679, of Philippe de Vendôme, the great-grandson of Henri IV, as Grand Prior marked the decadence of the Order. He had shown valour as a soldier of Louis XIV in the foreign wars, defeating Prince Eugene in Italy, keeping Marlborough and Charles III of Spain in check, but was slothful and luxurious and rendered himself notorious by the scandal of his life. This Prior gathered in his palace a circle of literary friends, including Voltaire, Chaulieu, and La Fare, whose wit and writings, if classical, were largely pagan. The 'chroniques scandaleuses' of the times give a prominence out of all proportion to their worth to the supper parties and revels of this Grand Prior. He severed his official connection with the Temple by surrendering his title in 1719.

The Abbé Chaulieu was Intendant of the Revenues of this Grand Prior and lived in the hôtel de Boisboudran. This building stood in the north-west angle of the Enclos, truly a literary retreat, approached by a long line of chestnut trees which was known by the romantic name of the Allée des Soupirs. He, too, played the patron in turn to a literary coterie whom he entertained in his fine apartments. As a typical Abbé Commendataire of the times, he drew large revenues from an abbaye, that of d'Aumale, and four priories, those of Oléron, Pourier, Resnel, and Saint-Etienne, of which he was the titular head, and which he probably visited but rarely. He died in 1720 aged eighty-four years.

Other Famous Habitués

The improvident La Fontaine was given free quarters and provided with a pension of 600 *livres* a year. A poetic epistle of his to the Abbé Chaulieu remains, calling for a statement of his account. Renier, the musician, and favourite pupil of Lully, had not only free quarters, but daily commons in the Convent and a pension of 1000 *livres*.

The painter Raoux, on returning as an art student from



A SUPPER PARTY IN THE TEMPLE IN THE DAYS OF VENDÔME

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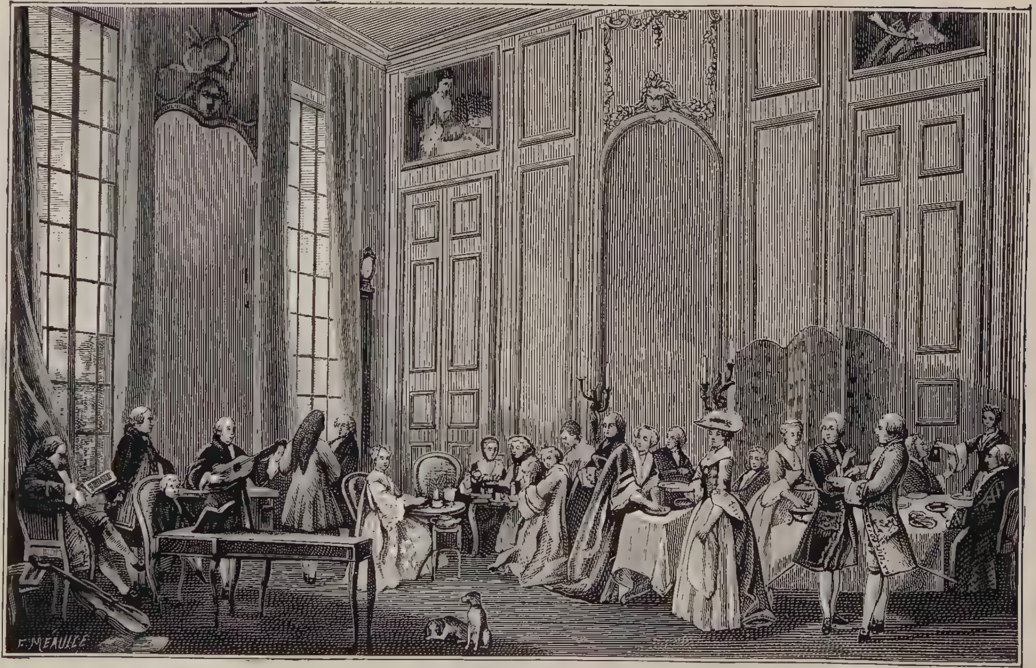

A MUSICAL EVENING AT THE PRINCE DE BOURBON-CONTI'S

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Italy, obtained the friendship and patronage of the Grand Prior Vendôme. He painted remarkable portraits of this Grand Prior and of his successor the Chevalier d'Orleans, and is probably best known to the reader by his genre subject: 'Les Noces de Village', in the Louvre. Nattier, too, the protégé of Louis XIV and a painter of royal subjects such as Catherine of Russia and the Queen Marie Leczinski, enjoyed a residence in the house over the great gate of the Temple, and was employed in decorating the Prioral Palace.

The Prince de Bourbon Conti succeeded the Chevalier d'Orleans as Grand Prior in 1742 and held office until 1776.

Under his patronage more worthy names are found in the literary annals of the Temple. The Abbé Blavet was appointed by him as librarian and given quarters in the palace. This savant, a student of economics and history, contributed to the controversies of the day in several learned works, including an essay on Modern Agriculture and an examination of Hume and other historians of Great Britain and Ireland; and in his translations into French of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* he did a good service to England and to France.

This Prince was the last Grand Prior to reside in the Prioral Palace, which he used much. He, too, loved great entertainments, but without the scandals of his predecessors.

Two pictures by Oliver, one in the Louvre and the other in Versailles, record the brilliancy of his tea-parties—*thé à l'anglaise* was then becoming the vogue—and of his music parties. This artist has depicted the young Mozart at the piano and the violinist Géliotte playing to an appreciative audience which included the Prince and Princess de Beauvau, Trudaine, Hénault, Pont de Vesle, Meyran, the Comtes de Chabot and de Jarnac, the Bailli de Chabrillant, the Maréchales de Mirepoix and de Luxembourg, the Comtesse de Boufflers and her daughter and the two Comtesses d'Egmont—a galaxy of art, intellect, and aristocracy.

A Beautiful Palace

The Prioral Palace was, in its last transformation, worthy of all that was best in the old régime.

The Grand Prior J. de Souvré had abandoned in 1667 the simpler edifice near the church which had sufficed for his predecessors. The great Mansard designed the new palace and was paid an enormous sum. It was improved by Oppenord. It was placed in the extreme east angle of the Enclos, removed from the monastic buildings, and had a separate entrance on the rue du Temple. Here was a classical portico, opening into a great horseshoe courtyard. A colonnade and, later, a row of willow trees ornamented this space.

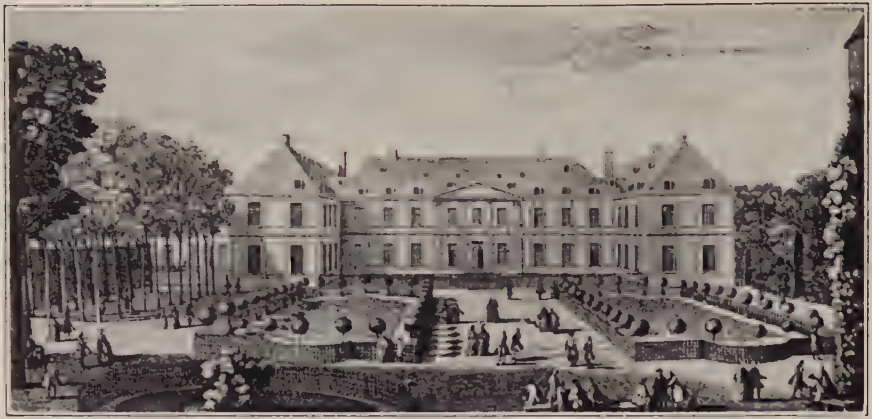
The palace was approached by a perron and consisted of two storeys, with a third in the mansard roof, and two wings. The entrance hall, in one of these wings, contained a marble stairs leading to the four grand salons on the first floor. This grand suite was approached through a Salon des Nobles, and included a famous Salle des Glaces which is shown in the pictures by Oliver, already mentioned. There were also a guardroom, which figures in a picture in the Louvre; a curious room in Turkish style; a library; two cardrooms; a billiard-room; the private apartments of the Grand Prior, and rooms adjoining for his valet; a number of bedrooms and dressing-rooms, bathrooms, and furnace-rooms. In the wings were a 'garde-meuble', wine-cellars, a strong-room for the plate, and the servants' quarters. The kitchens were grouped in a 'cour des cuisines'.

A private chapel in the palace served to remind the princely owner of his religious duties as Grand Prior.

A large garden behind the palace ran down to the south angle of the Enclos, and the end of it remained a wilderness. The Great Tower stood nearby and could be reached from the palace by a long covered narrow passage. Through this passage Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette walked to their future prison, having been served with supper in the dining-room of the palace on the fatal evening of August 12, 1792. The Royal prisoners, being thus entertained on first entering, fondly thought that they were to be housed in the palace itself in dignified, if irksome, imprisonment.

Beyond the Great Tower stood the hôtel de Vernicourt, with an immense garden, long famous as the residence of a Madame de Belloy. The Prince de Bourbon Conti, when Grand Prior, bought up the leases of this hôtel and of several others, intending to increase his own revenue by selling his interest in turn to a third party. This he did, but the new holder raised the rents to such an extent that many tenants threatened to leave. This Grand Prior also built a theatre known as the 'Comedy' in the Enclos, but a licence was not obtained from the Crown for the players to perform in it, and it was converted to other uses.

The Memoirs of the eighteenth century mention many



GRAND PRIOR'S PALACE AND GARDEN, 1770

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other great houses in the Enclos. Notable amongst these were the hôtel d'Harcourt of which the last tenants were the Prince de Guise and his heir, the Maréchal duc de Richelieu; the hôtel de la Vallière belonging to the Marquis of that name; the hôtel de M. de Pontcarré, first president of the Parliament of Rouen, later occupied by the Bailli de Saint Simon; the hôtel de Laval-Montmorency, and the hôtels of Porlier de Rubelles, chancellor of the Grand Prior, and maître des comptes, and of the President Hénault. A much-admired garden marked out in a severe English style was that of the hôtel de Boufflers. A tablet in the present rue du Petit Thouars marks all that remains to-day of that great hôtel.

The Stars go out

In 1776, the Prince de Conti died. In that year a young child aged three years, Son Altesse Royale Louis Antoine de France, duc d'Angoulême, succeeded as Grand Prior, becoming the titular head of the vast interests of the Order in France. He never lived in the Temple. The Chevalier de Crussol was appointed by a letter of the King to administer the Temple in his name.

In June 1789, the Grand Priory was transmitted to his brother, another child, aged seven years, Son Altesse Royale Monseigneur le Duc de Berry, the administration remaining as before. The Comte d'Artois, the father of these two children, occasionally visited the Temple, but did not habitually reside there.

The Prioral Palace accordingly ceased in its last years to be a centre of social activities. It was left in the hands of caretakers and its great salons were filled with dust-sheets. Many of the great hôtels in the Enclos also closed, their owners being drawn for their amusements to Versailles, as had been the rest of society in Paris long ago. The stars being gone, their satellites lost their lustre, and the shopkeepers, dealers and artisans working in the Enclos, dependent on a commerce-de-luxe, suffered badly.

But a cataclysm greater than the loss of a Grand Prior in residence was soon to fall upon the Temple. The financial strain which years of unproductive and unequal taxation had placed upon the people throughout the country, was telling upon the social and economic life of Paris. The Palace of the Tuileries, also empty, was falling into disrepair. Poverty and consequent discontent were manifesting themselves in movements of unrest amongst many grades of society, and the affairs of France were moving towards the Great Revolution.

Routine goes on

Despite a certain sense of social disintegration which had fallen gradually upon the capital, the official routine of the Order of Malta was still vigorously carried on by some striking personalities in the Temple.

The Chevalier de Crussol resided in his quarters in 'le cour du bailliage', held his court on Saturday afternoons, and was busy in this very summer of 1789 about the making of a great manuscript map of the *censive* of the Temple, showing the vast property of the Order in Paris. This document may well have filled with dark thoughts of spoliation some hungry clerk working upon it, imbued with the new ideas of equality, and living 'au sixième, in the Faubourg S. Antoine'.

The last Prior of the Church of S. Marie du Temple was Claude Ligny de Laquenoy, Grand Vicaire du Diocèse de Luçon et Prédicateur du Roi, who, with the assistance of six chaplains, provided the numerous religious services required by the Rule or by the many pious foundations attached to the Temple Church; and baptized, married, or buried the laity of the little world in the Enclos.

The Abbé Ricard, decorated in his cradle with the cross of the Order, and now enjoying, as Commander of Narbonne, the revenues of a rich Commandery, sent to the Treasury in Malta his monthly 'bilan' of receipts and expenditure of the Temple with many other reports, for he was Agent-General of the Order in France.

Maître le Paige, a venerable old man, in office since 1757, defended as 'avocat au parlement' the interests of the Temple before the courts of the King. Le Paige attained celebrity also as one of the secretaries of the parliament of Paris, having collected a large library upon the history of that institution and having written extensively on its rights.

The Archivist of the Temple, M. A. Barthelemy, originally an advocate, as had been his father, a native of Angers, now a 'Donat of Devotion' of the Order, was housed as a layman in an elegant set of apartments in the Little Tower. As befitted his position he followed, but not with too great exertion, literary pursuits. When not composing amorous and witty verses to his young housekeeper, he was engaged in writing an historical examination of the post of 'turcopilier', for which honour several Langues in the Order were competing. A book of his lighter productions, beautifully written in his own hand, may be seen in the Musée Carnavalet to-day. The article upon the 'turcopilier' is to be found in the National Archives.

Two great officials of the Order, of whom more will be heard in this story, dwelt in their private apartments in Paris at this time—the Ambassador of the Order, the Bailli de Suffren, a personal friend and old colleague in arms of the Grand Master de Rohan, and the Receveur Général, the Chevalier d'Estourmel, a devoted servant of the King. Both of these Knights were in constant communication with the authorities in Malta. In the Embassy were two faithful clerks, Cibon père et fils. They, too, were destined to play their part in the fateful drama soon to unfold.

Let us leave now the Temple in Paris and tell something of Malta and its government during these last years of the old régime.

PART II

Malta on the Eve of the Revolution

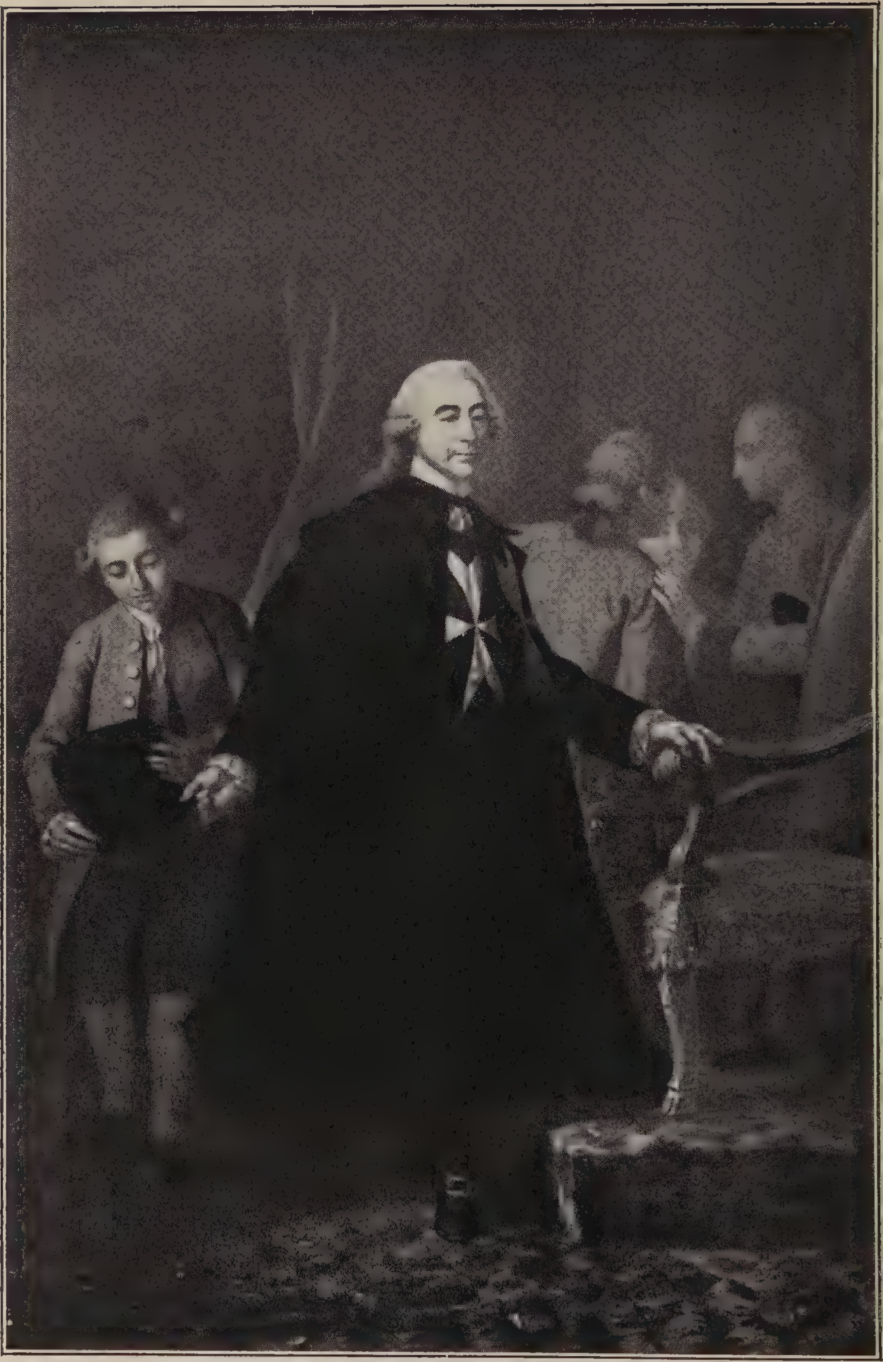

Photo Gouder

GRAND MASTER DE ROHAN, 1775–1797

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CHAPTER I

GRAND MASTER DE ROHAN AND DOUBLET HIS FRENCH SECRETARY

Grand Master de Rohan—His French Secretary—Doublet's Memoirs

A KNIGHT of the Venerable Langue de France—François Marie des Neiges Emmanuel de Rohan Polduc—now ruled in Valletta. Elected in the year 1775, he was the twenty-seventh Grand Master to hold office in Malta, and seventieth in the Order.

De Rohan, who thus became a sovereign prince, was born in Spain in the year 1725, and had been brought up there.

His father, Jean Baptiste de Rohan, was the head of a branch of the great house of de Rohan, descending from a Jean, first Vicomte de Rohan. He had, like his ancestors, been content to dwell as a simple provincial seigneur in his château de Polduc in Brittany, until banished by the Regent, the Duc d'Orleans, for the part taken with other Breton nobles in a movement which followed the conspiracy of Cellamare. This conspiracy had purposed to seize the Regent, the Duc d'Orleans, and to place the grandson of Louis XIV, Philip V of Spain, on the throne of France with the help of Spanish troops, who were to be brought into France by the ports of Brittany.

On the failure of their movement, when fifteen Breton nobles were executed on the Place du Bouffay at Nantes, Jean de Rohan escaped by flight from the death penalty and sought a refuge amongst his friends in Spain, where, under a continued sentence of banishment from his home, he settled and married a Spanish subject, Marie Louise de Veltoven. François, the future Grand Master, was their eldest son.

This son first entered public life as an officer in the Walloon Guards of the Spanish King, and served later in Italy in the household of the Infante Don Philippe, Duke of Parma, when, as his Bull of admission duly registered in the Cancelleria at Valletta shows, he became in July 1756 a Knight of Malta.

While still a young Knight, de Rohan visited for the first time his motherland of France, making contact with the remote collateral branches of his family now reaching the limelight of history in Paris in such persons as the Prince Rohan Soubise, dwelling in his great 'hôtel particulier' in the rue Rambuteau, or the Cardinal de Rohan, destined shortly to play a part in the drama of the Queen's Necklace, at the Court of Louis XVI.

But France did not claim his services and young de Rohan turned to Malta, where he apparently took his duties as a Knight of the Order very seriously, serving under the famous Admiral de Suffren in the fleet, becoming a General of the galleys and reaching later the high position of a conventual bailli with a seat in the 'Consiglio di Stato' of the Grand Master Ximenes de Texada.

On the death of the Grand Master Ximenes de Texada in 1775, de Rohan, who does not appear to have revisited France, was unanimously elected Grand Master. He must have been stirred to find that his name was still remembered in his father's provincial home, for it is recorded that in this year the nobility, clergy, and the members of the tiers-état, happening to be united in their Assembly at Nantes, had appointed a deputation of three Bretons to travel to Malta to express the felicitations of the Province of Brittany to one of their fellow-countrymen on his elevation to the throne of Malta.

The appointment of a French Knight as Grand Master was naturally very favourable to the interests of France, and to the three French Langues. Many French Knights were advanced to high dignities in the Order and given positions about the person of the Grand Master.

The position of French Secretary was of great importance. This official was appointed by the Grand Master personally, and was also, by virtue of his office, a member of his household. The French Secretariat dealt at this epoch with all the correspondence of the Grand Master with France, Austria, Bavaria, Prussia, Poland and Russia, Holland, the Austrian Netherlands, Turkey, the Regencies of North Africa, England, and even parts of Italy. A competent official was consequently required to deal with this immense correspondence. De Rohan was unfortunate in his first selections, but eventually found in this department a subordinate official, a Frenchman of humble origin, by name Pierre Jean Louis Ovide Doublet, who, acting under a titular head, conducted the complicated business of the branch with an unusual skill and a personal devotion to the Order in its critical years.

The French Secretary at Malta

The reader will therefore be told something of this quiet yet firm figure behind the scenes in the Grand Master's Palace in Malta—the acting head of the French Secretariat—who received most of the correspondence coming out of France and drafted with his own hand and with his own ideas many of the important letters sent by the Grand Master de Rohan to the Ambassadors of the Order or to the Government in France during this period.

This Secretary frequently counselled 'his prince', as, with a feudal touch, he calls the Grand Master, against lending the Order to the counter-revolutionary movement which gained amongst the numerous French Knights who resided in, or sought refuge at Malta. His advice was taken on some crucial occasions and thus were disasters averted or delayed.

Doublet, indeed, remained in office until the seizure of Malta and the expulsion of the Knights by General Bonaparte, when as personal representative of the Grand Master, von Hompesch, he attended the dramatic interview granted by General Bonaparte to the delegates of the Order and of the Maltese people on board the French flagship *Orient*, when the Articles of the Capitulation of Malta were signed. He was retained by General Bonaparte, as will be seen later, as a member of the Commission of Government of the island until it passed under the British Crown, in 1800. Doublet was then banished from the island of his adoption by the British Commissioners, and while still in exile, in 1805, wrote his memoirs of these times.

Doublet's Memoirs

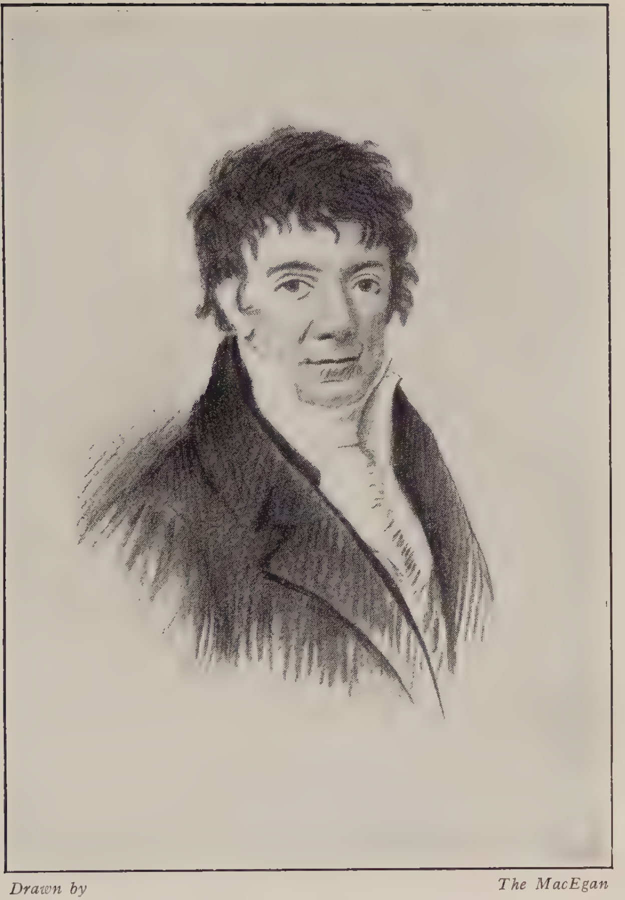
These memoirs—though accessible in manuscript—were not printed until 1883, and they yet await the appraisement by a scientific historian of their profound reflections upon public administration; their study of the characters and motives of public men under de Rohan in Malta or in France; and their picture of the Revolution, and of the invasion and capture of Malta by the French, the latter especially valuable as from a first-hand and trained observer.

His editor, the Marquis Panisse-Passis, tells us: 'Pierre-Jean-Louis-Ovide-Doublet was born at Orleans, where he was baptised on August 26, 1749, in the Parish of Saint Firmin. He was the son of Jean Doublet, a gardener, and his wife Jeanne

Desir. Doublet has said nothing of his youth in these personal reminiscences, beyond telling us that he was educated in a religious establishment with the intention of his becoming a priest. He keeps silent on the motives which prompted him to go to Malta, where we find him in 1779 a soldier in the Infantry Regiment of the Order, which he quitted two years later with the rank of "premier sergent", as his certificate, delivered by his Colonel, testified.'

Doublet then entered the service of the Order in the secretariat of the Grand Master as second secretary—but he explains in piquant and acute detail how he actually took charge of the whole branch for seventeen critical years. This came about in the following way. Nobody, according to the tradition of the Order, could be a director of a department of State except a full Knight, and nobody could be a full Knight without four quarterings of nobility. It was necessary, therefore, to place a full Knight over Doublet. The first of these chiefs after a short time went mad. The second was a young marine officer, a Breton, who had lost a leg in action and whose incompetence, insolence, and misbehaviour were such that after six months he was dismissed in disgrace. The third, a competent and experienced man, was so absorbed with a violent hate for another Knight against whom he had a lawsuit that he gave up the post in order to go to Rome to fight out the case. The fourth was de Royer, a man appointed nominally by the Grand Master because he could be trusted to leave Doublet alone, a servant-at-arms, a semi-ecclesiastic aged seventy, innocent of historical knowledge and devoted to ecclesiastical concerns and a good friend of both Doublet and the Grand Master. Thus was Doublet left in direct relation with the Grand Master, dealing with all the international and local correspondence passing through the French Secretariat.

Hereby hangs a little tale. In connection with the establishment of the new Grand Priory of the Anglo-Bavarian Langue in 1783, by which the Poles were brought into the Order, adding large revenues, Doublet achieved such success that he was rewarded by affiliation to the Order as a 'confratello', or 'Donat of Devotion', with privilege to wear the 'croix' with six points in gold and enamel in his button-hole, and in white linen sewn on his coat, and moreover, the right of enjoying pensions from any Commandery in the appointment of the Grand Master. His Bull of reception is dated October 6, 1783.



Drawn by *The MacEgan*

P. J. L. OVIDE DOUBLET

SECOND SECRETARY IN THE FRENCH DEPARTMENT OF THE ORDER AT MALTA, 1781–1798

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Further promotion was in contemplation for him. But he slyly married—with the assistance of the Bishop, but without informing the Grand Master—a worthy Maltese, Elizabeth Magri, at a time when his chief was about to recommend him for a full conventual chaplaincy. The revelation of this felicitous event, the pretended anger of de Rohan and the ‘ prince’s ’ fatherly reception of the happy but trembling pair in the Palace at Malta, are some of the lighter pictures that relieve the gloom of Doublet’s writings.

De Rohan’s reign lasted twenty-two years, from 1775 to 1797, embracing the French Revolution and its repercussions in Malta. An endless intellectual activity marked the rule of this Grand Master both in his intervention in public affairs on the continent of Europe, through the Envoys and Representatives of the Order accredited to the various States, and in the smaller but complicated matters arising in the national life of Malta.

Both overseas and at Malta, the interests of the Knights were to be seriously attacked.

Before the reader can form an adequate judgement upon the merits of de Rohan’s government, two questions must be considered : Was the Order and all it stood for in Malta at this period, the end of the eighteenth century, an anachronism ? What was the legacy of difficulties which the new ruler received from his immediate predecessors, the Grand Masters Pinto and Ximenes ?

CHAPTER II

MALTA AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

1571–1773

Was the Order an Anachronism?—The Islamic Mind—Racial Feeling Flickering—Malta a Clearing House—Slavery in Malta

OF the Order of Malta, the English traveller Brydone wrote in 1770:

'This institution, which is a strange compound of the military and the ecclesiastic, has now subsisted for near seven hundred years, and though, I believe, one of the first-born, has long survived every other child of chivalry.'

The implication was that the institution was doomed soon to die. Many thinking persons felt that the golden age of the Order had gone. Its utility as a world force amongst Christian nations was questioned. Ascetic minds went further and considered that its aristocratic form and great wealth were ill suited to the changing conditions of the times, and to the original moral and religious mission of its members. There were some, on the contrary, who said it was the modern world that was wrong and not the institution. An historical retrospect becomes necessary for an examination of these problems.

At the battle of Lepanto in 1571, the Allied Christian Powers, under Don John of Austria, had defeated the fleet and forces of the Crescent. In this battle the galleys of the Order of Malta had been given the place of honour. The heroic stand of La Vallette and his Knights in the great siege of Malta, ten years before, had, indeed, helped to make this victory possible. It was commemorated by a medal struck by Pope Pius V, in which the breath of the Almighty is shown destroying the Turkish fleet.

After the Renaissance, the amazing progress of Science and Invention applied to warfare made the Christian States of Europe largely independent of the Order of Malta for the defence of their shores against the infidel invaders.

The Islamic mind, indeed, had its own marked powers, its own philosophy, its science and its art, preserved by tradition or teaching, coming to it down the ages from the 'dim mysterious East', from that Arabia which gave to the Turks

VALLETTA HARBOUR TO-DAY

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themselves and the indigenous races of North Africa so much of their enlightenment; but it had ever appeared incapable of reaching, concurrently with Western Europe, the necessary scientific standards of life to meet the Christian nations on equal grounds.

So in the centuries between the defeat of Lepanto and the French Revolution, the Sultan of Turkey failed to raise an effective fleet or an adequate army, or to maintain an organized empire as understood by civilized Europe, despite the vast coastline of his dominions, his subject peoples in many continents and the great material resources at his command. Thus Turkey failed to become a paramount power in the Mediterranean.

In the year 1700, however, Islamic influence in North Africa was still strong in numbers and in political control. Morocco, it is true, was a separate kingdom, but it followed the Koran. The Barbary States of Algiers, Tunis, Cairoan, Tripoli and Barca were actually ruled by princes who had sprung from Turkey—corsairs who had come from the Near East and had imposed themselves with their Turkish followers upon the indigenous races. So it was that the Sultan of Turkey could always count upon these States as willing allies in his attacks upon Malta.

A Perpetual War?

The formula of a perpetual war between the Cross and the Crescent was not sufficient for the permanent needs and desires of the peoples. The development by Western peoples of the more peaceful arts of shipbuilding and navigation was to induce new contacts between the Christian States and these Eastern countries on the vast shores of the Mediterranean—the contacts of trade and commerce.

A pacification of this sea was step by step proceeding on new lines and with new relations. Its germ, indeed, had been there in the days of the Crusades. The objective of the journeys of the rich merchants of Amalfi had been trade, not plunder. The Knights of S. John had sought only to protect the Italian traders from Turkish aggression. Even in the Kingdom of Jerusalem, as in the Vatican, the incense upon the Christian altars had been grown on infidel soil, and sold by unbelieving hands to Christian traders.

So, imperceptibly through the centuries, the kingdom of Morocco, the Barbary States, Turkey itself and all the lands beyond the Red Sea—those of Persia, of India, and of the Far

East—made more peaceful contacts with Western Europe, in varying degrees and at different times, to the reciprocal advantage of the peoples. Wars, outrages, violence, on both sides interrupted the various steps, but as the years passed, common interests, in the exchange of money and commodities, were progressively satisfied.

From the West came, first, hardy merchant-adventurers. Not all were peacefully received, but some trading was done, by neither side, perhaps, too equitably. Then came the agents of more organized bodies, the great Trade Companies, under the Royal Charters of Western Kings, flying the flags of their nations and often accompanied by armed soldiers for protection. These companies seek more permanent footings—a fort, a factory, a settlement in a North African State, or in some Turkish dominion. This is a matter for more formal negotiations—it is an affair between the Christian Sovereign and the Basha—it is an affair of State—a treaty must be arranged; for it is a matter of common interest to the subjects of each Sovereign—and incidentally of a large subsidy to the native prince!

Racial Feeling Flickering

But the fires of racial feeling, flaming for centuries, did not die down at once. At intervals the Moslem States made war on the Christian Powers—but decently and in due order, even as the Christian Powers warred with one another—by timely notice and the withdrawal of their diplomatic representatives. In 1615 Malta is invaded by Turks, who are duly repulsed. Later on, in 1684, Venice is threatened, and in the next century, in 1760, Tunis is daring enough to attack France.

When official warfare was abandoned, irregulars on both sides operated—privateers from the West, and Turkish corsairs from the East. Notable were the Algerine pirates. From Malta, too, individual Maltese and, unofficially, many a Knight fitted out their ships of prey. The prizes and rewards were great, the risks and hardships severe—rich booty on the one hand and slavedom for life on the other.

But the stream of organized trade and commerce between East and West flowed unceasingly. By the eighteenth century, permanent Consular officers were appointed by the Great Powers of Europe to the semi-barbaric States of Morocco, the Barbary States, the Sultan at the Porte, to far-off Persia and India.

What, officially, was the part to be played by the Order of S. John in its Island of Malta in this new Mediterranean?

There was much to be done in protecting the peaceful commerce of Christian nations from the attacks of corsairs and privateers.

The Great Hospital in Valletta now became of increasing benefit to merchant shipping under all flags, and the Port of Malta, with its great dockyards and natural harbour, was a convenient place where ships could refit or obtain supplies.

Malta a Clearing House

The Knights as a body were not very directly interested in trade. Commerce was still considered degrading to Knighthood.

The people of Malta, however, were developing an overseas trade of their own. Malta became a vast clearing-house between East and West by reason of its unique geographical position, to which the Maltese merchants were fully alive. The later Grand Masters—notably Pinto—constructed large lazarettos or store-houses in which merchandise could be kept; these were rented to the Maltese and to the Agents of European traders. Cargoes from Damascus, Alexandria, Tripoli, or Tunis were stored here and in turn sold by the merchants of Valletta to the great importing houses of Spain, France, Genoa, Naples and Venice, who took the goods away in their own ships.

This trade brought the Order a revenue in port-dues and in quay-side rents. It made the Maltese merchant rich. It was ruthlessly interrupted by the French Revolution and the Napolenic wars. It has never since then realized the promise it gave in the eighteenth century.

This page of the economic history of Malta has yet to be written. Ample materials for its analysis remain in the carefully kept records of the ‘ Dogana ’, or Custom House, in Valletta to-day.

Slavery in Malta

In the eighteenth century, slaves for export were considered as merchandise in Malta, for the institution of slavery still flourished under the Order.

The remarks of General Porter in this connection are worthy of record:

‘ Since the earliest ages it had been the invariable custom in Eastern warfare that the prisoners taken in battle should be reduced to slavery, and this system was in full play before the Crusades had introduced a Christian element into the warfare of Asia. A spirit of retaliation led to the establishment of a similar system on the part of the Christians, and their Turkish captives were invariably reduced to slavery.

'After their establishment in the Island of Rhodes the Knights continued the practice which ancient custom had legalized in their eyes; and both in that Island and at Malta their galleys were manned by Turkish slaves. A prison was established within the convent where the slaves were placed, when not employed on board ship, and whilst on shore they were constantly employed upon the fortifications or in the dockyards.

'The Order not only retained their slaves for their own use, they at the same time sold to private individuals any number that might be required.

'The truth is, that Malta became a vast slave mart. While slaves were obtained legitimately in the forays against the nests of infidel pirates who infested the northern coasts of Africa, it is to be feared that in their desire to keep the "bagnio" at Valletta well stocked, many a roving Knight did not discriminate between a piratical corsair of Algiers and a peaceful infidel mariner of the Levant.'

The archives at Valletta record numbers of slaves deported annually from Malta for the use of Kings of France and of Spain, and there is a letter from Charles II to the Grand Master Nicholas Cottoner asking for the same privilege.

Yet it is probable that at Valletta the slaves employed by the Order were better off than anywhere else in the world. Their ailments were treated in the great hospital and they were taken into domestic service. They were remembered in the wills of their masters. They were allowed, under certain conditions, to trade on their own account and to acquire their full liberty.

It is gratifying, therefore, to read that in 1722 the Order reflected the more humane standards leading to a realization of the brotherhood of man. This is apparent in a treaty which the Grand Master Vilhena entered into with the Sultan of Turkey himself. In a letter concerning this, the Grand Master wrote:

'Our Order is not instituted for the purpose of ranging the seas to make captives, but to cruise with its armaments to protect the navigation of Christian vessels, and it only attacks those who obstruct commerce and who, wishing to make captives, deserve to be reduced to slavery. I have nothing so much at heart as to release the Mussulman slaves from their chains, and if the intentions of his Highness are the same, I am ready to negotiate for the reciprocal liberty of the captives either by exchange or ransom, according to the received custom between princes. His Highness has, therefore, only to declare his intentions which I will omit nothing to render effectual.'

This treaty went further and provided that: 'The Maltese shall enjoy the same privileges as the French in the Turkish dominions'.

Thus was a peace proposed by the Grand Master between his Order, Malta, and the Moslem.

So Brydone, visiting Malta in 1770, was able to write:

'Notwithstanding the supposed bigotry of the Maltese, the spirit of toleration is so strong, that a mosque has lately been built for their sworn enemies the Turks. Here the poor slaves are allowed to enjoy their religion in peace. It happened lately that some idle boys disturbed them during their service; they were immediately sent to prison, and severely punished.'

In considering this question of the slaves as prizes of war between Turk and Christian in the Mediterranean, a custom which continued up to the eve of the nineteenth century, it is desirable to remember that this was far from being the latest instance of slavery practised under Western civilization. The British carried on a slave-trade and employed slaves on their plantations in the West Indies. Until 1834, Mr. Gladstone was a slave-owner and was not in favour of parting with his slaves without compensation. In the United States of America slavery lasted until 1864, but at no time, as in the case of the Knights of Malta and their Mohammedan foes, did their slavery arise as an incident of warfare. It was for purely economic purposes that the Americans imported negroes from Africa to work on their farms and cotton plantations, as the British employed the indigenous blacks of Jamaica, San Domingo, and Barbados. The treatment received by the slaves under the respective systems, moreover, may be contrasted, and the contrast will not be wholly to the disadvantage of the Knights or even of the Turks.

CHAPTER III

GRAND MASTER PINTO 1741-1773 *AND GRAND MASTER XIMENES* 1773-1775

A Legacy of Difficulties—In Pinto's Reign—Conspiracy of the Slaves—Ximenes: His Prohibitions—The Revolt of the Priests—Mannarino a National Hero—The Inquisitor

THE Grand Masters Pinto and Ximenes had bequeathed a legacy of difficulties to their successor de Rohan.

The registers of the Consiglio di Stato in the reign of Pinto record several affronts to the Flag of the Order on sea and the violation of its rights on land, showing that the Order had, indeed, lost much in power and prestige.

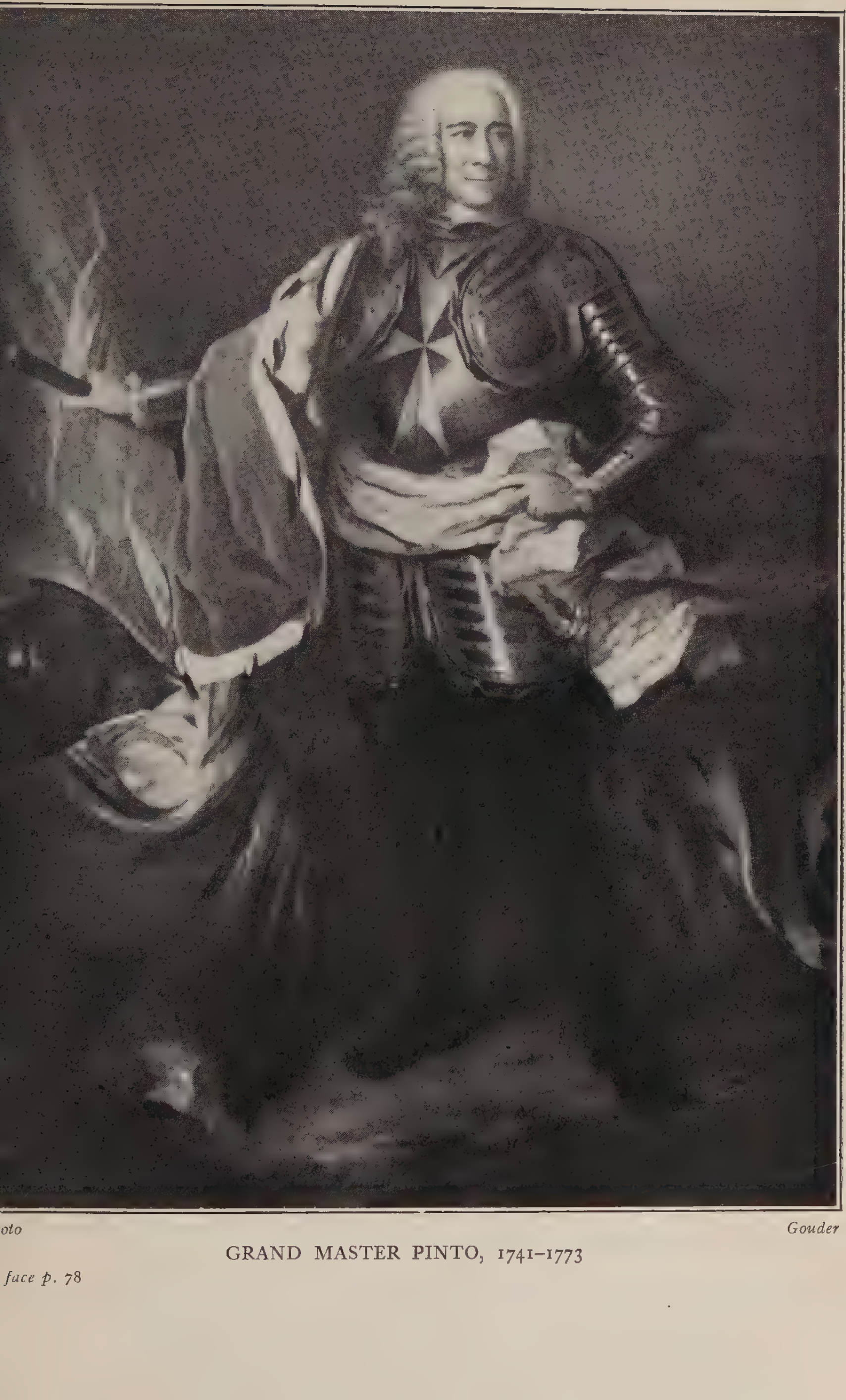
The Doge and Senate of Venice contested the Sovereign rights of the principality of Malta and expressed their dislike of the Knights in their midst by confiscating certain Venetian Commanderies; and the galleys of Malta were not received with enthusiasm in the Adriatic.

In the Kingdom of Naples, too, some of the property of the Order was seized, and the King, Charles III, had further claimed the right, in view of the ancient feudal suzerainty of his crown over Malta, to interfere in the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Island by appointing under his own hand a *Regio Visitatore* to make, on his behalf as Patron, a spiritual visitation of the Diocese of Malta, and the Grand Master had to invoke through the Ambassador of the Order at Versailles, the celebrated Bailli de Froullay, the help of the French Monarch, Louis XV, who intimated that France would assist the Order by force if necessary, in maintaining their rights in Naples.

Tension had arisen between the Order and England through certain incidents in Malta, where the Grand Master, disregarding the protest of the British Admiral, had hanged a young British sailor for a sacrilegious theft from a church. A graver matter was the discovery of a plot, in which the Consul, Edward Dodsworth, was implicated, against the security of the Island.

The British Consul was duly tried, convicted, and condemned to death, a punishment afterwards commuted by Pinto to imprisonment for life, against which sentence the Court of S. James protested. Dodsworth died in prison.

Russia gave evidence of her desire, developed in a later age, to



oto Gouder

GRAND MASTER PINTO, 1741–1773

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acquire Malta as one of her possessions—the Russian Minister, the Marquis Cavalcabo, accredited to the Grand Master, with confederates, secretly collected arms in his residence for a coup d'état in which the authority of the Order was to be overthrown —the Russian Fleet to play its part in an attack by sea.

On the discovery of this plot by the police of the Order, and the report of the matter to S. Petersburg, the Court of Russia diplomatically disavowed responsibility for their Agent, and Cavalcabo, being recalled forthwith, sought safety in France, where he died miserably, pursued by many writs and claims issued against him on behalf of his creditors by the Courts in Malta.

The Maltese subjects of Pinto were in some ways not discontented with his rule. This Grand Master's government undertook many public works, and gave much local employment, such as the building of Fort Chambray in Gozo, the enlargement of the Palace, the erection of the Castellania, the present Custom House, and the Pinto Stores on the Marina. Many roads, too, were extended in the Islands and attempts at economic development were seen in the planting of mulberry trees in the plain of the Marsa. Sicilian workers were brought to teach the art of silk growing to the peasants. The present library was founded in 1761, and the University of Malta in 1769. Eminent scholars were invited from overseas to come to Malta to fill the chairs of Philosophy, Law, and Divinity. Such activities gave rise to the usually accepted tradition of a glorious reign.

But another side of the picture is seen in the expulsion of the Jesuits from the Islands, in 1768, and the confiscation of their property, including school and church, these buildings being given to the new University. This indeed was only the 'last act in a series of contestations which had arisen between these Religious and the Bishop of Malta', into which the Grand Master was drawn, concerning the allocation of certain Diocesan funds—intended for a Seminary—which the Jesuits had acquired by a Papal brief for their own schools—an involved story which cannot here be told.

Certain scandals, it is said, marked the personal conduct of Pinto and other Knights, and several honest Maltese who protested were exiled, the supreme power of the Grand Master in Council being exercised. He joined to his pursuit of luxurious amusement that of the Philosopher's Stone, and spent immense sums in this futile endeavour.

Pinto also desired to acquire the Island of Corsica for the Order that he might play the part of a 'King in name' amongst other Monarchs, instead of being merely a 'Prince' as the Grand Master of Malta was then called. He spent large sums from the public Treasury in pursuing this end at the Court of Rome, but to no purpose. To meet the financial losses thus incurred by the Treasury, this Grand Master is said to have debased the coinage and injured the economic credit of the Order and of Malta.

Conspiracy of the Slaves

Another serious event in the reign of Pinto was the famous Conspiracy of Slaves which disturbed the growing peaceful relations between the Infidel and the Order. A narrative of this event is given by the French Knight de Boisgelin in his *History of Malta*. His words reflect to the full the attitude and feelings of a member of the Order in the 18th century, and his account of this conspiracy will now be given, as it illustrates in a striking fashion the part which the question of retaliatory slave-making played, up to the end, in the relations between the Order and the Mohammedan potentates in the Mediterranean. De Boisgelin saw active service in the fleet under de Rohan and had a deep knowledge of the Order and its problems. If not actually a spectator, he was very near to the time of the troubles he describes:

> 'The number of Turkish or Moorish slaves in Malta consisted at that time [in June, 1749], of about four thousand; some of whom were distributed on board the galleys, and formed the principal part of their crews, whilst others were employed in the different arsenals and magazines, and the public works at the ports, fortifications, etc. Individuals also received many into their houses as domestics; and most of the grand-crosses retained them in their service, as valets, grooms, and cooks. The Grand Master admitted them into his palace, where they acted in the same capacities. Two of them were particularly employed as valets-de-chambre, and slept in an apartment close to the bedchamber of the Grand Master, into which they were permitted to enter at all hours, either by day or by night.
>
> 'So great was the fancied security of the Order, and such their confidence in these people, that on board the galleys the slaves acted at the stern, and waited upon the captains

and Knights, who found them particularly exact and faithful; indeed, there was not one of the inns of the different languages where they were not employed in the kitchen. Among so great a number of slaves, those only were confined in the prisons or bagnios who were occupied in the public works; the others lived constantly with their masters, and the greatest part passed their lives so pleasantly, that very few were desirous of obtaining their freedom and returning to their own country: yet these very men were on the point of repaying such kindness by cruelly assassinating their benefactors! It is not, however, probable, that of themselves they would ever have formed so atrocious a design, had they not been excited to the act by conspirators, whose plots I am now about to unfold.

'Some Christian slaves, who composed the crew of a Turkish galley, had revolted, taken possession of the vessel, and carried her triumphantly into Malta. The commander of the vessel was also taken prisoner. He was the Basha of Rhodes, one of the greatest men in the Ottoman Empire, and he had a brother, not only the chosen favourite of the Sultan, but possessing one of the most eminent posts in the State.

'The Order, unwilling to draw upon itself the forces of the Grand Signior, and desirous to conciliate the Court of France, to oblige which the Maltese squadrons had discontinued cruising in the Levant, resolved to present to that power this illustrious prisoner (the Basha of Rhodes), whom they immediately sent to the Bailli du Boccage, the French Minister at Malta. At the same time the Grand Master and the Order at large wrote to his Christian Majesty, who was much pleased with this action and the deference showed him on this occasion.

'The apartment of the Basha (where he was kept in custody) was in a beautiful garden, situated in Floriana. He was attended by his own domestics, who had been restored to him, and he was allowed to the amount of one hundred and twenty-five pounds sterling monthly for the expenses of his household. So great, indeed, were the attentions shown him, that he was permitted to receive the visits of the Turkish slaves. But this generous proceeding had nearly been attended with the most fatal consequences.

'A negro who had headed the revolt by which the Christian slaves had possessed themselves of the Turkish galley, together with its commander, and who was discontented with the reward he had received, only wished for an opportunity to obtain a still greater. He therefore proposed to the Basha to put him in possession of the city of La Valletta, and consequently of the Island, of which it was the capital, the principal fortress, and the residence of the Order.

'The Basha agreed. Amongst his attendants was a secretary, a man of sense, and much better informed than the generality of the Turks; who spoke French and Italian extremely well, and was perfectly versed in most of the Oriental languages. This man was employed as principal agent in the affair; and it must be allowed that a better choice could not have been made.

'The slaves being permitted to attend the Basha, gave him an opportunity of holding assemblies in his own apartments, and it was in these meetings that this conspiracy was formed in the most secret manner. This plot was particularly dangerous, because no person had the slightest suspicion of it.

'The festival of S. Peter and of S. Paul, the first patron of the Island, was always celebrated at Malta with singular solemnity. The inhabitants of both towns and country repaired in crowds on that day to the Old City, as being the ancient capital of the Island, and the residence of the Bishop of Malta. The conspirators, therefore, made choice of this festival to attempt the seizure of the city of Valletta; the inhabitants of which, together with most of the Knights, usually left the Grand Master in the morning, and, indeed, frequently the evening before, in order to repair to the Old City. This absence the conspirators thought a favourable opportunity to possess themselves of the principal posts in the city; and the great heat at that time of the year inducing most people to indulge in sleep after dinner (in that country termed the *siesta*), they resolved to avail themselves of that moment to begin the massacre, not only in the palace, but in private houses.

'One of the Turkish slaves, who attended on the Grand Master as valet de chambre, and who was much beloved by his lord, was fixed upon to enter Pinto's apartment to cut off his head, and expose it from the great balcony of the palace. This was to serve as a signal to the other slaves to murder their masters. Some, indeed, were to be spared this crime, by the commission by others of one, if possible, still more dreadful—poison being distributed to all those who were employed in the kitchens of the palace and the inns of the different *languages*, so that everyone who sat down to table that day must have infallibly perished.

'It was likewise proposed that whilst this massacre was taking place, other slaves should rush into the palace by the four different doors, who, being reinforced and assisted by those employed within, should disarm the guard, and forcing their way into the armoury, distribute arms among their comrades, who, scattered about in different parts, would assemble together at the first signal. These villains thus armed, were to form themselves into different corps, which were immediately to repair to the city gates, the arsenal, Fort S. Elmo, and the two "cavaliers" near the royal gate. Once possessed of these posts, they had agreed on a signal to be given to the flotilla belonging to the Barbary powers, who were already acquainted with the plot, and whose arrival was the more impatiently expected by the conspirators, because the success of their enterprise entirely depended on their assistance; for the slaves were perfectly convinced that their force alone would be very insufficient to maintain them for any length of time in a place so well defended by extensive fortifications as the city of Valletta.

'This dreadful conspiracy was planned with consummate art and secrecy, but was discovered by an event entirely foreign to the plot.

'A young Persian, who had been forced to quit his own country and wander about the world, had enlisted himself a few months before as a common soldier in the Grand Master's company of Guards. The negro, who was the original conspirator, cast his eyes on this young man as a person who might be extremely useful in the affair. He therefore contrived to seduce him from his duty, and commissioned him to change the cartridges of the soldiers on guard at the palace. These two men usually met in a coffee-house, solely resorted to by the slaves. It was kept by a Jew, who had a wife and child; he himself was a new convert, and was not only acquainted with the conspiracy, but was to act a principal part upon the occasion.

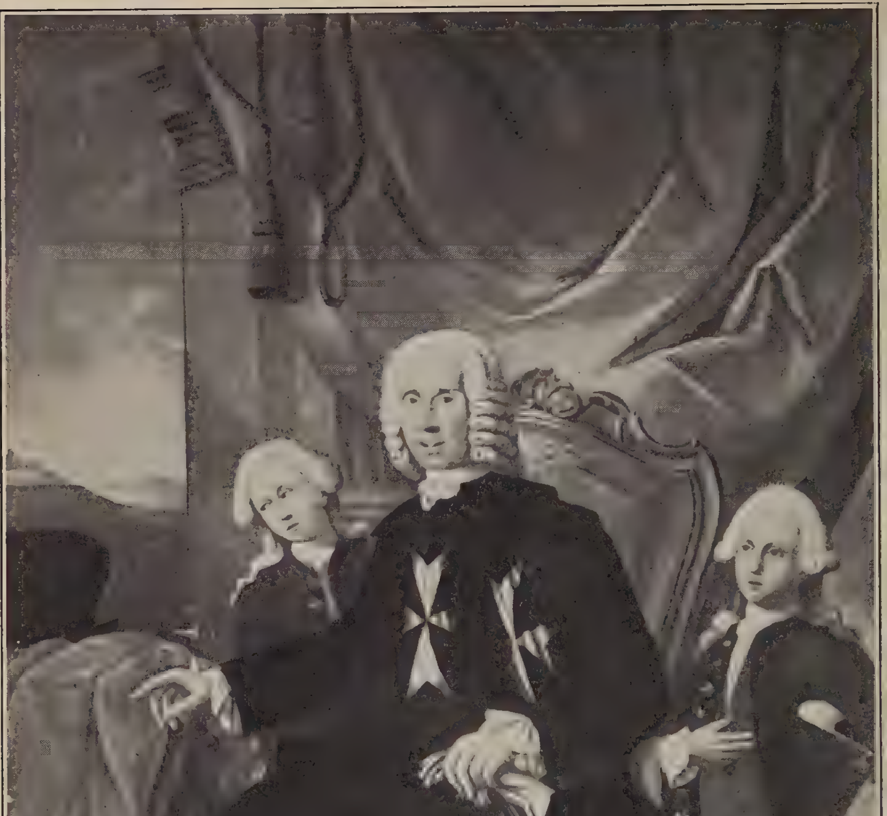
'The negro and the Persian, in one of their meetings at this coffee-house, became heated by the fumes of tobacco, and the spirituous liquors which they had taken too freely: they began to dispute most violently, and in the heat of argument some imprudent expressions escaped them, which were overheard by the Jew's wife, and gave her the greatest uneasiness.

'From words the negro and Persian proceeded to blows; and the former was so carried away by passion, that he drew his stiletto, and attempted to stab his adversary, who, however, made his retreat unhurt. Terrified at the danger he had escaped, and reflecting upon the still greater that threatened him, the Persian did not lose a moment, but flew to the Commander de Viguier, who was Commandant of the Grand Master's guards, and throwing himself at his feet, implored his protection, and declared all he knew of the conspiracy. His officer received him well, put a variety of questions to him, and, after listening attentively to his answers, dressed himself hastily and repaired to the Grand Master, accompanied by the Persian.

'In the meantime, the Jew reproached the negro in the bitterest terms for his violent conduct, which had exposed them all to the most imminent danger; but he received no other answer than threats and curses. The moment the negro quitted the coffee-house, the Jew's wife, terrified at all that had passed, entreated her husband to go without loss of time, and reveal the whole affair to the Grand Master himself. He accordingly set out immediately for the palace, and appearing alone before Pinto, fell on his knees, and declared every particular relative to the conspiracy. At this moment the Commander de Viguier arrived with the Persian, who, being confronted with the Jew, confirmed the truth of what he had advanced. The Grand Master was convinced of the reality of the plot, and orders were given to apprehend the negro.

'A tribunal was instantly formed to take cognizance of the affair, and no one was refused admittance.

'No sooner was the negro brought before the tribunal than he confessed his crime, and impeached several of his accomplices. They successively appeared, were heard, and their depositions taken, without the name of the Basha being mentioned. The causes of suspicion were, however, so strong, that it became a necessary precaution to secure the persons of those attached to his household: as to his own it was sacred, and under the safeguard of the King of France, from the moment the Grand Master and Council had committed him to the care of the French Minister. Many of his



GRAND MASTER XIMENES, 1773–1775

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domestics were accused, and brought before the tribunal; the rest were forbidden to hold the smallest communication either with the slaves belonging to the Order or with those who were the property of private individuals.

'Nearly a hundred of the conspirators were apprehended and convicted, and the inhabitants of Malta testified the greatest joy at being delivered from such a perilous situation.'

Such is the account of the conspiracy of the slaves, given by the Knight de Boisgelin.

Ximenes: His Prohibitions

Grand Master Pinto died in 1773 at Boschetto in his ninetieth year.

His successor, the Spaniard Ximenes de Texada, only reigned two short years and presented an austere morality in happy contrast to his predecessor. He commenced his reign with a grandiose scheme of social and economic reform for both the Order and the Maltese people. This was disliked, misunderstood and resisted.

The conflict latent between competing ecclesiastical jurisdictions in the Island, as to the rights of the Pope, the Grand Master, the Archbishop, and the Inquisitor, was stirred again and brought to a formidable head by several incidents, one of which arose in the following manner:

The Clergy were very numerous at Malta. They possessed, as they still do, a great moral influence. They were composed, not only of those who were actually full priests in Holy Orders, but also of those, very numerous, who sought to escape the domination of the Grand Master by taking only minor Orders—the tonsure and the habit—and becoming thus ecclesiastical subjects owing allegiance only to the Bishop.

The Bishop of Malta was now Mgr. Giovanni Pellerano, an Italian, whose father was from Nice and whose mother was a Maltese. He was independent of the Order, claiming to take his nomination only from the King of the Two Sicilies.

It happened that one of the household of the Bishop attacked, in some dispute, a soldier of the galleys of the Grand Master. At this the Chevalier de Rozers, Commander of the galley, seized the offender and had him brought on board, where the sailors punished him, disregarding the clerical immunity of the 'Bishop's man'. The Bishop as a reprisal sent some of his guard to arrest the sailors, who were taken up and imprisoned in the Episcopal prison in Vittoriosa preparatory to a trial in the Bishop's Court.

Some of the Knights in retaliation assembled before, and broke into, the Episcopal prison, and liberated the prisoners. Feeling ran so high that the Bishop had to fly to Città Vecchia for safety.

Another incident arose when Ximenes, in his scheme of reform (whether in a desire to disarm the people, or to restrict destruction of game, is not quite clear), issued a regulation forbidding the secular clergy with the rest of the people to shoot game, an amusement which they had long enjoyed. The Bishop, Mgr. Pellerano, took up the case of his priests and urged them to shoot everywhere, even, it is said, in the places reserved for the officials of the Grand Master's Court. This audacity only hardened the Grand Master, who repeated his prohibitions, and arrested and imprisoned all priests whom he found shooting, and confiscated their arms.

Finally, following upon these conflicts, the Grand Master complained to the Pope of his Bishop, and Mgr. Pellerano was summoned to Rome to explain his conduct.

The Revolt of the Priests

A Maltese priest appeared on the scene in active defence of the rights of the Church. He, by his criticism of the Order, attracted to him all the party of malcontents in the Island, and by the memory of his actions, was destined to influence the Maltese people in future and more critical years.

Don Gaetano Mannarino was of Maltese blood, for his father had been a gentleman of the Isle.

It is not known whether chance or the considered policy of Mgr. Pellerano placed this priest in the parish of S. Publio, in the district of Floriana.

This area had been fortified by the great engineer Floriani, and the large space within included streets, houses, gardens, shops, market place, granaries, churches, inns, and cafés, all the elements of a lively and self-contained town.

The only ingress was on the east of Porta Reale, leading to Valletta, and on the west by Porte des Bombes, both of these gates being closed and guarded at night.

Floriana was consequently so placed that through it all traffic of the Island going into and coming out of Valletta by land had to pass, and many Maltese from the country were wont to stop there, for rest or relaxation, when visiting on business or pleasure the City of the Knights.

The town, where diverse persons, representative of the people at large, thus met, was a focus where the feelings of the Island might well be sounded and worked upon.

In Floriana, therefore, Don Gaetano Mannarino found a ready hearing for his message of revolt which was carried to the ends of the Island by this stream of people passing his door.

He was a man of simple manners and gentle habits without worldly ambition and of no personal resentments—who might in calmer times have become a bishop or a founder of some great movement for the social improvement of his fellow-men—but now, with his sense of injustice quickened by religious zeal, he put his daily duties aside and preached the violated rights of the clergy.

Religion insulted by the spoliation of the revenues of the churches, the obnoxious law forbidding shooting, the pernicious influence of the easy morals of some of the Knights in the Island, the despotism of these Knights to everyone outside the Order, such was his theme, and from it he passed by easy transition to the fundamental problem, the right of the Maltese people to manage their own affairs.

Don Gaetano, believing that the people were wholeheartedly with him, conspired with certain other seditious priests to seize—an act of almost obvious madness—on a fixed day, the Fort of S. Elmo. This, moreover, they marvellously did on September 23, 1775, and forced the gunners on duty to turn a cannon on the Magistral palace itself.

A shot fell into a gallery next the hall in which the Grand Master and the Sacro Consiglio were assembled, actually considering means to stop this unexpected and ridiculous rebellion of which they had information. At the same time another group of priests, with the help of the people, had seized the Italian ‘ cavalier ’, but there they could not find the key of the powder magazine.

At this period the guards on duty in the city, chosen from the Grand Master’s bodyguard, did not exceed more than one hundred men. The Sacro Consiglio accordingly sent for the Chevalier d’Hannonville, who commanded the regiment of Guards, and ordered him to call out his troops and to quell the revolt. Several individual Knights set out with him, and one of these was murdered immediately by some unknown assailant in the crowd.

The formidable rebellion hoped for by Mannarino and feared by the Grand Master, did not develop; the people, too long inert, took no action, but fell away, and the guards, now augmented, easily entered the two Forts. In one of these were found only Mannarino and four other priests.

The Consiglio Segreto of the Grand Master acted swiftly.

That night four heads were placed on pikes on a cavalier near the Porta Reale, for the country folk and others entering the city at dawn to see, and the news was told that Mannarino himself had been spared execution, but was now condemned to imprisonment for life.

The executions of these priests and the imprisonment of Mannarino were against Canon Law, the Grand Master having no jurisdiction over the clergy, who even on criminal charges should have been tried by their own court, and the Archbishop, then in Rome, protested in person to the Pope demanding redress, but without avail.

Mannarino a National Hero

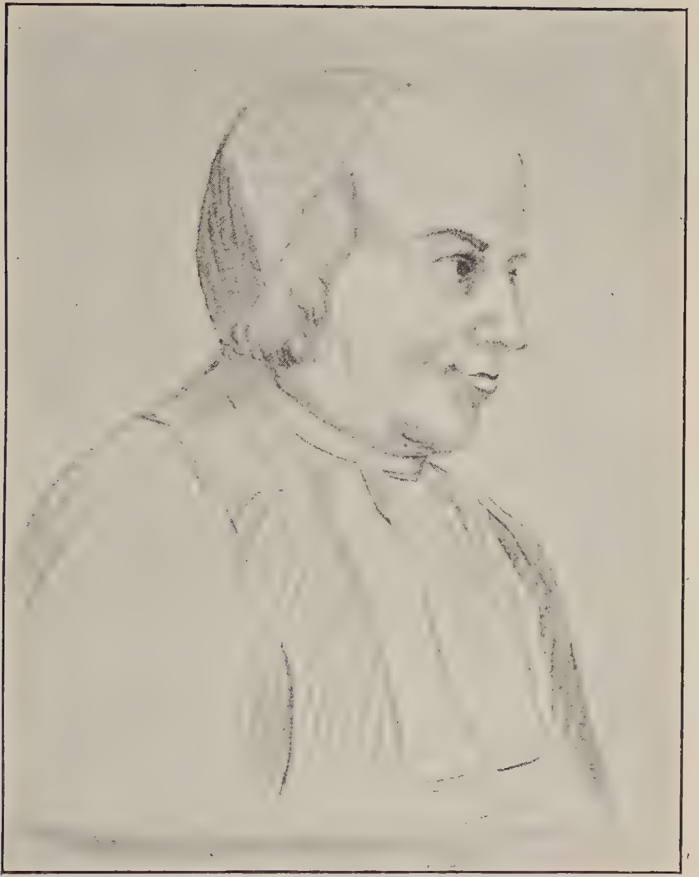
Mannarino lay in prison until the French occupation in 1798 when, liberated by General Bonaparte, he emerged, very feeble in body, to find himself a national hero. He lived in Malta until 1816, and was buried in the old parish church of Hamrun.

Mannarino's memory has been perpetuated in the name of the road constructed from Birchircara to Misida, and a tablet to the memory of Pellerano is placed in the Cathedral of Notabile.

The Grand Master, on his victory over these 'turbulent' priests, prohibited for ever all carrying of arms by ecclesiastics—secular and regular—and called for the deposit in the Castellania of the arms in their possession. Further than this, the Grand Master proposed, with the help of the Ambassadors of the Courts of Madrid and of Versailles and the Vatican, to limit the number of priests and ecclesiastics to be ordained in the Island in some relation to existing benefices. This plan was not at once proceeded with, for Ximenes, the Grand Master himself, died suddenly.

The merits of Mannarino as a patriot became in the succeeding centuries the subject of discussion and controversy. Suffice it here to state that this simple priest had set alight in the minds of the Maltese people a train of discontent with the rule of the Order which no Sacred Council could extinguish.

After the revolt, Mgr. Pellerano remained in Rome seeking



DON GAETANO MANNARINO
PRIEST AND PATRIOT

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in vain to be restored to his bishopric in Malta. Pope Clement XIV, who had summoned him to Rome in 1774, died the next year and was succeeded by Pius VI. The new Pope was no more favourable to Pellerano, who was induced in 1780 to renounce his See and accept a pension of 7000 Scudi from Malta, with the title of Archbishop of Rhodes. He never saw Malta again and died in 1783, aged 87 years; he was buried in Rome in the Church of San Lorenzo.

The Inquisitor

At the root of the difficulties of good government in Malta, as everywhere else, was the human element of 'love of power and delight in its exercise' and consequent individual jealousies. The existence of three distinct co-ordinate jurisdictions in Malta affecting the lives of the same set of people, very numerous, in the same very small area, easily gave rise to social friction even in the most virtuous activities. There was the civil authority of the Grand Master with powers of life and death over all the people of Malta and all the members of the Order; there was the spiritual jurisdiction of the Grand Master over his own priests and their activities in the Churches of the Order, also open to the laity; there was the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Malta over the priests and religious orders in his diocese and over the people of Malta in all spiritual and some temporal matters, such as the form of marriage and the right of asylum.

The Pope, in virtue of his supreme authority over all, had regularly appointed during the Order's rule in Malta an Inquisitor to represent him and to compose competing claims between the local authorities. The first appointment so made was that of Mgr. Duzzina, in the year 1574. During the troubles mentioned in this chapter, from 1771 to 1777, Mgr. Antonio Lante, a Roman Duke, was Inquisitor.

CHAPTER IV

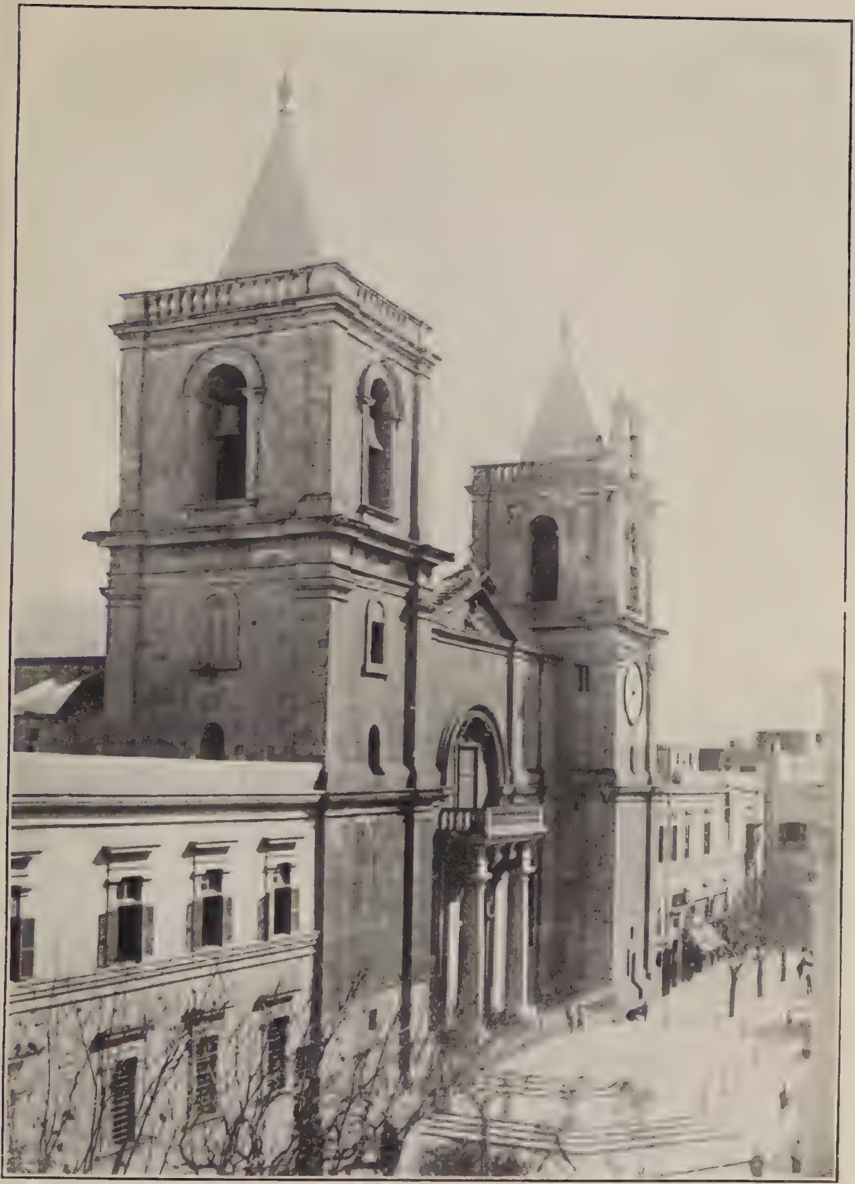
GRAND MASTER DE ROHAN'S ELECTION AND CHAPTER GENERAL

A Grand Master is Elected—A Chapter General is Convened—Some of its Transactions—The Spirit of the Chapter General—A Valuable Ally

ON the death of Ximenes on 13th November, 1775, the formula for the election of a Grand Master, originating in the Papal brief of 1295, was followed. The Consiglio di Stato at once met, the seals of the will of the late Grand Master were broken, and a Lieutenant of the Magistry was appointed to render justice and carry on the affairs of the Order and of the Islands pending the election of a Grand Master. On the next day the body of the deceased Grand Master was exposed to view in the great hall of the Palace on a magnificent catafalque. The elaborate and customary symbols of death were present—the suit of armour laid out in pieces on a black-covered table, the large black feathered fans borne by the pages on duty and the notice announcing the death of the Prince affixed to the door. From the Palace the corpse was carried to be buried in S. John's Church with all the pomp and ceremony due to a sovereign Prince. The obsequies took place that evening 'because the next day would be the third day and the election of a new Grand Master must be proceeded with, for so the Statutes ordained; they did not want to defer any longer an election of such importance without doubt to cut away the cliques and divisions within the Order but also to avoid the claims of the Court of Rome, where there was a maxim that as long as the vacancy remained unfilled the Pope had the right to anticipate the nomination of the Grand Master'.

On the third day after the death an electoral committee of sixteen members was formed on a complicated system of proportional representation. The selection of this committee was made in the Church of S. John, the members of each Langue assembling in their own particular chapel for the purpose.

The choice of the Grand Master was now entrusted to this committee who, under a President, sat in conclave for the



CONVENTUAL CHURCH OF S. JOHN, VALLETTA
Shewing Balcony from which Election of Grand Master was announced to the people.

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purpose in a special room situated over the vast porch of S. John's Church. The election being made, the President announced, looking inwards to the church, from the balustrade of the gallery, still to be seen, to the Knights assembled in the nave below, the person whom they had selected as Grand Master. The new Grand Master then ascended the throne within the rails of the high altar and received the homage of the Brethren. Passing thence to the Magistral Palace, he showed himself to the people, who had gathered without in S. John's Square to watch for the appearance of their new Prince.

Thus was conducted, in the words of the Minute Book of his first Consiglio, 'the most happy election of de Rohan, chosen unanimously Grand Master of the Order'.

The fêtes in his honour over, the congratulatory letters of the Pope, Kings and Princes received, read, and suitably acknowledged—they may be seen to-day beautifully bound in a show-case in the Public Library—the deputation from Brittany entertained and sent away, the new Grand Master turned with determination to the unpleasant task of effective reform. For it will be imagined that de Rohan's task of government was to be no light one.

An instrument to this end was now available in the Chapter General of the Order, which Ximenes had, in a letter of 3rd October of this year, 1775, already asked the Pope to summon to take into consideration the affairs of the Order and the state of the Islands.

This Assembly had not met since 1631, and had been often found, by reason of its numbers and the diversity of interests represented, very difficult to manage; it was usually convened on occasions of grave difficulties and dangers. It was, moreover, the supreme authority of the Order, and de Rohan did not hesitate to invoke its powers. Pope Pius VI gave him the necessary authority to do so.

A Chapter General is Convened

The Grand Master summoned, accordingly, the Chapter General to assemble in Malta on the 24th November, 1775, 'the last Sunday of the month and the feast of S. John of the Cross'; and addressed the body of Knights of diverse nationalities, who were thus brought together in Valletta, in the following words:

'The first founders of our Sacred Religion judged it indispensable to call frequently a Chapter General to maintain always in vigour our laws and to censure, and recall to their duty, those who had not followed them. Just reasons prevented recent Grand Masters from following so useful a practice from which came our good constitution. The reasons are removed and now delay would be a danger. His Eminence Ximenes, seeing the abuses which had been introduced in many branches of our administration and principally in that Religious Discipline to which we are bound, on the occasion of representations made to him by the Venerable Chamber, moved to call the Chapter General.

I have no other merit than in following the good intentions of my predecessor. With great satisfaction, I see realized the desire of our Brethren who in general have endeavoured for many years to put into practice our wise rules. The sentiments of these true Religious allow me to hope that with the same zeal they will be able to put aside personal interest and seek only the benefit and success of our Sacred Religion and the security of this Fortress.

By means of our rule and our statutes we will remove any abuses which may have been introduced into our administration, and in reminding our Brethren of the three virtues—poverty, chastity and obedience—which they have promised God, Holy Church, and our great protector, S. John the Baptist, they would follow, we will reach the happy end set before us in this Chapter General.

[Sgd.] ROHAN.'

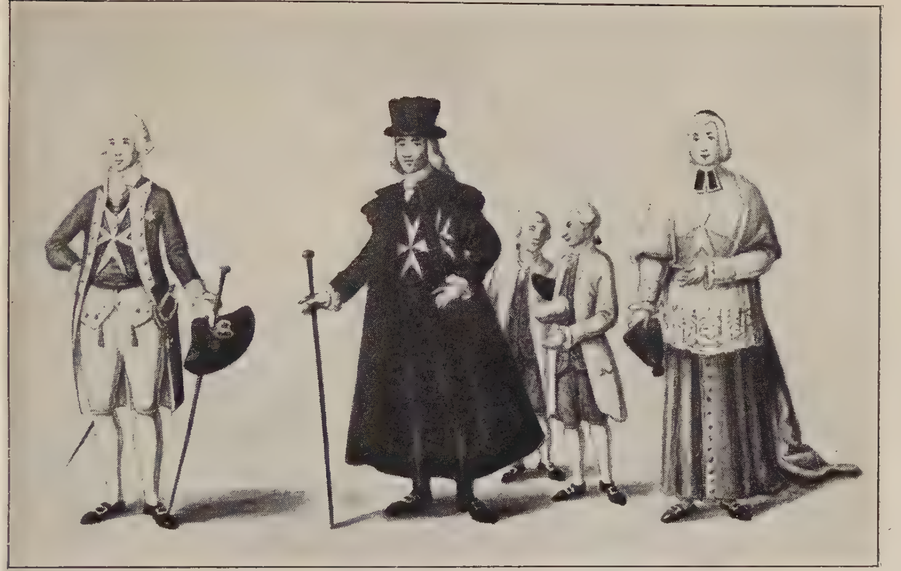
The scene has been described in many books and a picture of the Assembly of 1631 hangs in the Louvre. It is sufficient here to recount a few features from the records of this great undertaking which reached back to the days of Chivalry.

With 'great pomp and happily' was begun, as the long Latin preface in the Minutes recounts, 'the celebration of the Sacred General Chapter of the Holy House of the Order of the Hospital of Jerusalem and of the Holy Sepulchre'.

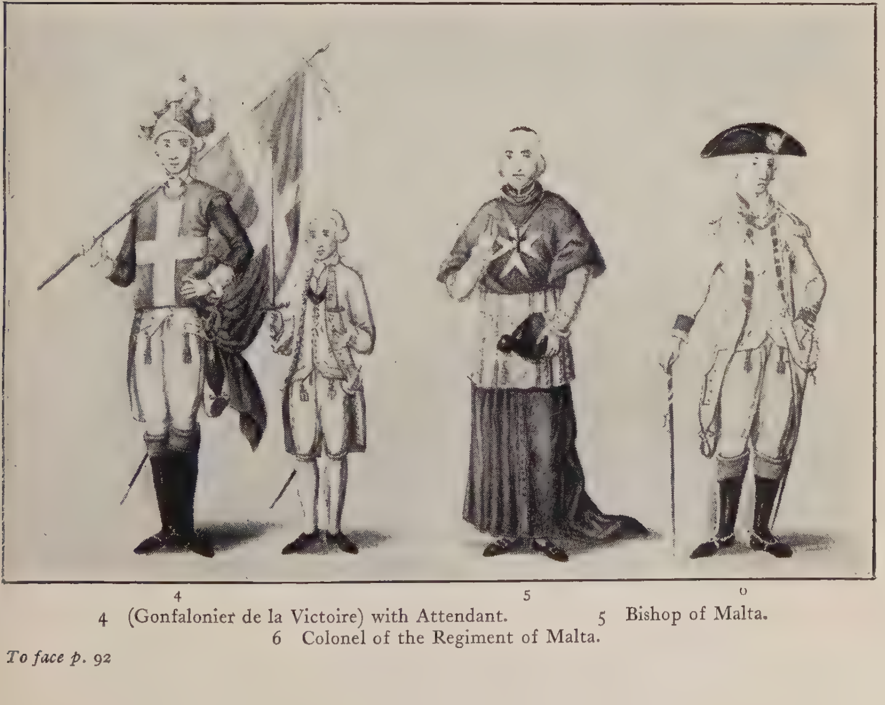
On the Sunday morning at eight o'clock, the Eminent and Reverend Lord Brother Emanuel de Rohan, Grand Master, and the Venerable Priors and Grand Crosses with other members of the Chapter assembled at the Magistral Palace, whence they proceeded on foot to the Conventual Church of S. John, where, received by the Prior, Fra Joseph Dominic Mainard, they put on the 'Pallio'—vulgarly known as the 'Manto

MEMBERS OF THE ORDER IN OFFICIAL DRESS, EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

From drawings by Zimelli, 1795, Bibliotheca, Valletta.



1 General of the Galleys. 2 Grand Master and Pages.
3 Prior of the Church of S. John in habit of Choir.



4 (Gonfalonier de la Victoire) with Attendant. 5 Bishop of Malta.
6 Colonel of the Regiment of Malta.

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di Punta'. Mass of the Holy Ghost was then said and sung by the Prior, after which, preceded by the Cross, the clergy, singing the 'Veni Creator', returned in their vestments to the Palace, in the order of solemn procession amid the peals of all the bells of the church, bearing with them the banner of the Order and followed by a great concourse of the Knights and Religious.

This banner had been privately brought into the Conventual Church from the Auberge of the Venerable Langue of Auvergne, where it was kept, as of right and as their most precious possession, when not in use. It was now carried by the head of this Langue, the Commander Brother Caspar de la Richardie de Besse. This Knight was Master of the Horse to the Grand Master, and on this occasion he wore a helmet and a breastplate with a rich serica tabard.

Reaching the Palace, the procession entered the great hall, and here the Grand Master ascended the throne on the platform behind which hung the famous tapestries. The usual red silk umbrella of State was held over him. Prayers were said and the Gospel of the Sunday, 'Cum venerit Filius hominis', read, the Secretary to the Cancelleria, the Auditor Bruno, having recited the rules and regulations aloud, the learned Father Aurelius de Gama of the Order of Friars Minor gave an oration on the spirit and ideals of the Order. The Marshal then gave the Standard in token of submission into the hands of the Grand Master and, on receiving it back again, placed it on the front of the Palace, by the window on the right of the Grand Master's throne, where it remained, unfurled to the view of the people in the square below, until the termination of the Chapter General and the publication of its ordinances.

The oath was taken by the Assembly, who swore to transact their affairs 'to the honour of God, the advance of the Religion, and the peace of its members . . . according to God and their conscience, having removed hatred, hope and fear and all worldly passions'.

The 'Capitulants' numbered fifty-four persons.

The old statutes required a Chapter General to end in fifteen meetings. The actual work of legislation was entrusted to a Grand Committee consisting of sixteen members, two nominated by each Langue, known as *I Reverendi Sedici*, with the addition of experts and officials, but as the Order grew it obviously could not transact its business in so short a time. The session was, if the occasion required, prolonged for eight more meetings, at the end of which all remaining matters were remitted to the Grand Master and his Council, known for this purpose as the *Consiglio Compito delle Retensioni*, who announced in due course the new statutes and supervised their publication.

The Chapter General, which we are describing, was thus held, and terminated on the 11th January, 1776, having assembled, as a 'whole house' or 'in committee', some forty times. The Brethren, who had come, with their retinues, in large numbers to the Island to attend it (and whose housing and maintenance had doubtless sorely tried the officials managing the Assembly), then dispersed, to carry to their distant Commanderies an account of the new laws to be obeyed.

Some of its Transactions

In their seven weeks, the Chapter General had taken far-reaching decisions upon many matters of wide importance and still of interest to-day, which may be read in full in their Minute Book.

The transactions were recorded in an immense volume, of large brief size, of over three hundred closely written manuscript pages. The Bailli of Aquila was the official Secretary, as Vice-Chancellor of the Order. The actual work of recording was entrusted to two learned priests, Fra Joseph Chinzi and Fra Celestino Casha. This book in the titles and headings of its pages, the paragraphing and the marginal notes, and the ornate handwriting of unvarying elegance, in its solid binding and the ease with which it can be opened and read is an excellent example of the well-kept records of the Order.

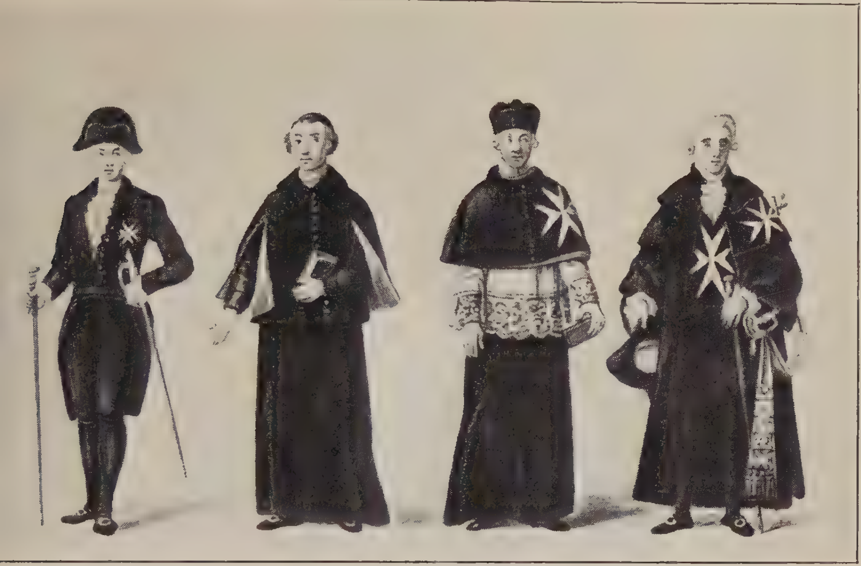
The procedure at future elections of a Grand Master was modified.

The state of the finances engaged the Chapter General at an early stage. Reports were presented in detail showing the revenues from abroad and from Malta, the management of local Commanderies and the method of keeping accounts.

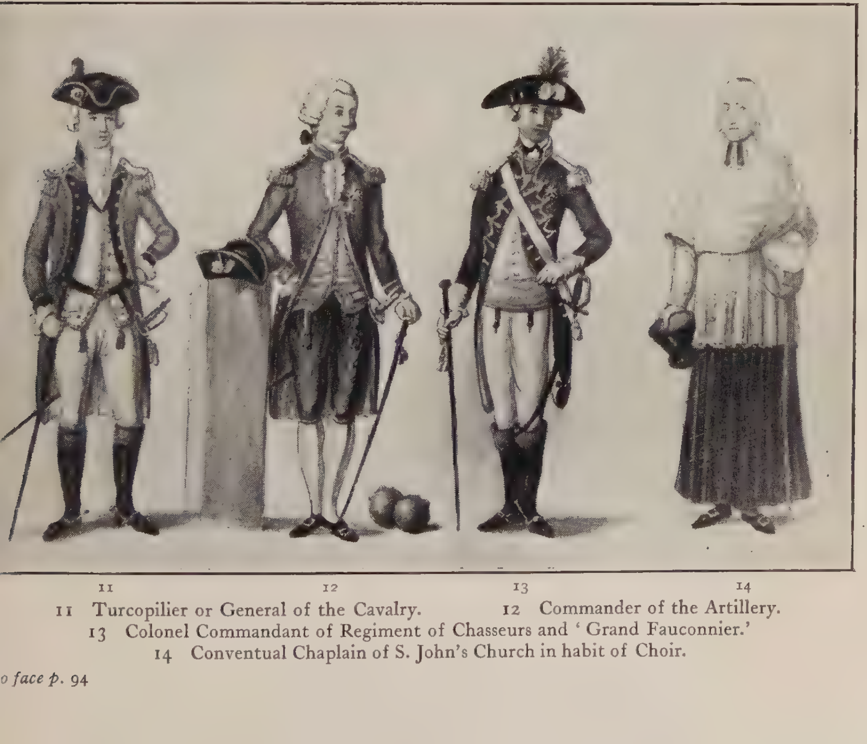
A large deficit was found in the administration of the Central Government. The Chapter General directed this to be met by an increase in the annual contributions from the members of the Order at large. Tables were recorded showing revenues in foreign, and comparatively in Maltese, currency.

A reform of the Treasury was clearly called for, and this, as will be seen, was to be undertaken by the French Knight, Bosredon de Ransijat.

MEMBERS OF THE ORDER IN OFFICIAL DRESS, EIGHTEENTH CENTURY



7 Master of the Horse. 8 Inquisitor. 9 Priest of Obedience
10 Grand Marshal of the Order.



11 Turcopilier or General of the Cavalry. 12 Commander of the Artillery.
13 Colonel Commandant of Regiment of Chasseurs and 'Grand Fauconnier.'
14 Conventual Chaplain of S. John's Church in habit of Choir.

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The state of the fleet and of the army came up for consideration, and having in mind the anxieties experienced in the recent reign of Ximenes in the unrest of the native population of the Islands, already described in the Revolt of the Priests, the Chapter General called for the establishment of a new regiment, to be recruited as a ' foreign legion ', to protect the Order against internal enemies, and a document on the subject in the Grand Master's own hand was presented for consideration. The uniform of the new regiment was settled. At the same time directions were given to raise in the country itself a native Militia of ' cacciatori ' drawn from the casals. The conduct of some of the novices and of the Knights themselves when quartered at Malta was closely connected with the discontent of the Maltese people. The Chapter General accordingly proposed fresh pains and penalties in cases of lawlessness by the Brethren towards the natives and towards one another. Measures were proposed to strengthen the powers of the local police. Remarkable in its progressive ideas was the proposal put forward by some French Knights for ' the banishment of beggars from Malta '.

A table of ceremonial salutes was settled, detailing the precise honours to be given by presentation of arms, beating of tambourini, etc., to the Grand Master, the Bishop and the various dignitaries of the Order, and on the passing of certain religious processions in the streets.

An advance in favour of the Maltese people was made by the Chapter General.

The citizens of Malta had as yet no voice in the government of the Order through the Congregations of State or in the Assemblies of the Langues.

The Maltese nobles, as such, could not become full Knights, but a few had been allowed, by grace of the Grand Master, to do so where they had become, by residence outside their Island, the subjects of some State within a Langue—in Naples or elsewhere. They were never to become Grand Masters or conventual baillis.

The Maltese clergy, it is true, had the privilege of becoming priests of obedience, and even Prior of S. John's Church; but as such, they did not enjoy a Commandery on the continent. The many Maltese laymen in the Civil Service of the Order were always subordinated to a Knight, who was to them a ' foreigner '.

With the full consent of the King of France, the Langues of

France and Auvergne introduced a rule by which a certain number of the Island citizens, even if they did not leave Malta, could become as Conventual Chaplains or Servants d'Armes members of these Langues. The Langue of Italy made a provision for them on similar lines.

The Order was not yet prepared to admit the Maltese as full Knights. This proposal was to come from a Maltese patriot at a later date, and by it Malta might have been retained by the Order, but it was not adopted.

Significant of this spirit of conciliation was the fact that five distinguished Maltese jurists[1] were employed by the Order to give legal form to the proceedings of the Chapter General in the compilation of the Statutes; and to their issue, later, in a large printed volume in 1783.

With the memory of the Revolt of the Slaves in mind, the Chapter General formulated fresh rules for the discipline of their slaves. The punishments, of great severity to our minds to-day, included some hours of the corda, or temporary hanging, and floggings of fifty or one hundred lashes. The Statutes, however, imposed rigorous penalties on Knights and others who used personal violence or otherwise ill-treated them.

The question of slavery in Christian communities was beginning to stir men's minds at this epoch; and some systematic analysis of the views, then current in Malta, in contemporary letters or diaries of those attending this Assembly, would prove of great value to the story of human liberty.

In happy contrast to the somewhat reactionary treatment of the slaves adopted by the Chapter General, was the bold and progressive line taken in the first new Rule issued by the Venerable Sixteen on the subject of Education.

The postulants for the priesthood in the Order, in view of their duty to preach the Gospel to the masses of the people, were reminded of the importance of a high standard of education in the Ministry.

Tutors were not to be allowed to teach in the Islands without a licence and certificate of their competence.

The Knights, too, as soldiers of the world, were reminded of the importance of mathematics in the naval and military art. The Venerable Council was requested to make suitable regulations for the compulsory attendance at classes in the University of all Knights and Novices on service duties. The unhappy end of the Order in Malta prevented the development of this interesting education scheme.

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[1] Their names were Bruno, Menville, Micallef, Lauron, and Gufre.

Having in mind the discussions which arose on the publication of Vertot's famous history of the Order—when the author so offended many of its adherents, by his presentation of the facts, that a commission was appointed at Malta to refute his errors—a strictly theological discipline was imposed upon the Knights by a regulation prohibiting any member of the Order from writing a history of the 'Religion' without the permission of his superiors.

Perhaps a second Vertot was known at this moment to be cutting another historical quill.

Many religious matters naturally claimed the attention of the Chapter General. The Sub-Prior of the Church of S. John, Fra Lombard, for instance, presented a lengthy document in which he raised eighteen matters of ritual and of the rights of his Conventual Chapter, which will interest any reader who may have witnessed the impressive services of this church, where the original stalls of the Knights and the Conventual Chaplains are still used by the Maltese priests of to-day. Certain ceremonies were reorganized, such as the *festa* of a treasured relic of the Order, the right hand of S. John; the procession on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception in the Church of S. John; and that in the Sarria Church in Floriana. Representations on religious matters also reached the Chapter General from the Prior of the Temple Church, and of S. John de Lateran, in Paris.

Reports on the Convents of *Les Dames Maltaises* at Toulouse, Martel, and Beaulieu, were presented and grants in aid were voted to them.

There are lengthy complaints of Knights and Priors in their local Commanderies, as to the infringements of their rights and privileges, with quotations of ancient papal briefs and magistral bulls. Such was the protest made by the Bailli of Manosque, presented by the Chevalier Seytres Caumont, against his Bailliage's being reduced to a 'mere Commandery'; the indignant complaints of the French Langues against the admission of some of the nobles created by Louis XIV, who were now beginning to reach 'the hundred years of four quarterings' requisite for Knights of Justice. These nobles, they stated, were rejected as candidates by the Order of S. Lazare.

Of more perennial interest are the instructions, with suitable penalties for their infringement, issued for the good behaviour of Novices in their auberges—at table, complaints about the food were not to be made to the cook, nor to the servers, and firearms were not to be let off, nor drums beaten after sundown.

Then there was the request for pardon, which was granted, from the Marquise de Lionne who in her anxiety to hasten the entry of her son into the Order had broken the seals of the Order on the package containing the proofs of his Nobility, so as to insert a brief which she had omitted to present to the Commissioners. She had not realized, she pleaded, the dangerous consequences of her 'imprudent démarche' and asked also 'that her fault be forgotten'.

The reports presented to the Chapter General are in various languages. That of the Prior of the Church of S. John is in French; the Langues of Italy and of Spain report matters in their respective native tongues; there is a document apparently in Portuguese and a number of official documents are written in Latin.

The range of subjects treated was very large, and this selection is not fully representative.

Some of the Ordinances issued make difficult reading to-day; they are obscure both in the technical terms of an ancient régime and in their allusions to contemporary events long forgotten.

The formal findings of the Chapter General were sent in due course to the Pope, Pius VI, to obtain his final approval and, by an Apostolic letter, the full force of law.

The Spirit of the Chapter General

Doublet, in his memoirs, remarks of this Chapter General that 'a surprising spirit of disunion and disaffection underlay it, even, one might say, of sedition amongst the Knights against their august chief'.

A contemporary writer, M. de Non, confirms this view, in a book recording his visit to Sicily and Malta in the year 1778. This author is described as 'a Gentleman in Waiting to the King of France and a member of the Academy of Painting and Sculpture'. He speaks of the charms of the place and of his presentation to the Grand Master de Rohan, about whose position he makes these significant and somewhat cynical remarks:

'The post of Grand Master is the most eminent to which a private individual can attain, except that of the Papacy. Yet, notwithstanding this, it is possible that he may not be the happiest of men.

'Surrounded by ambitious pretenders, his court, like that of most powerful monarchs, is a prey to intrigue, and his Island State is so limited that he can never remove to any great distance from his tomb, towards which he well knows that a thousand of his brotherhood regret that his approach is so slow. Notwithstanding their submission, they seem to reproach him with every moment he steals from their ambition by continuing too long to occupy a place to which they all aspire in turns.

'Nor do political affairs render him more happy, when retired within his palace: under ties to all the sovereigns of Europe who grant unmeaning honours to his flag, and without the necessary forces boldly to act the part of a neutral power, he finds himself continually reduced to make apologies and compelled to give satisfaction to every Prince or State who think themselves entitled to demand it.

'In his own Island, surrounded with fortifications, with mortars, and with cannons, this unfortunate sovereign is perpetually on the defensive against internal cabals, conspiracies, and revolts.'

That many Knights at Malta had at this time abandoned the high principles of their Order is very true; but there is no doubt from their acts that Grand Master de Rohan and his Sacred Council were determined to restore within the Order a spirit of Christian endeavour and to institute for their Maltese subjects a better form of government. Immediate steps were taken to give effect to many of the reforms proposed by the Chapter General. The advent of the French Revolution in 1789 cut short this progressive policy.

A Valuable Ally

When the Pope, Pius VI, approved of the findings of this Chapter General he showed himself an ally of de Rohan in his policy of reform, for, as supreme Pastor, he took steps to set the Church in order in Malta.

In a long *Motu Proprio* of the 25th June, 1777, the Pope exposed 'the many abuses which he saw with sorrow had arisen in Malta which had apparently their origin in the excessive numbers of persons admitted into Orders without any care as to the qualifications prescribed by the Sacred Council of Trent.... The immunity of many of these clerics from the

Civil Courts had become intolerable to the Grand Master, so had also the immunity which certain Churches afforded to laymen seeking asylum there from criminal laws'. The Holy Father therefore drew up rules governing the relations between Church and State in Malta 'which should form between them an alliance of peace'. Admission to the priesthood or to minor orders was to be subject to tests of piety and learning in the candidates and the numbers limited to the benefices available. To give effect to these regulations the Pope nominated a new Inquisitor, Mgr. Chigi Zondadari, a grand-nephew of the Grand Master of that name.

For five years after the recall of Pellerano, Malta was left without a Bishop. In 1780 Vincenzo Labini, a Calabrian and a religious of the Theatine Order, was appointed to the See. He owed his appointment to the Court of Naples. Elected in Rome he was escorted from an Italian port with ceremony by the galleys of the Order to the Islands of his new Diocese.

It is said that de Rohan did not like the idea of having to honour a stranger with the Grand Cross and a seat in the Council, but he bowed to the wishes of the Pope. He was rewarded for his obedience, for he found in his new colleague as active and restless a reformer as himself.

The new Bishop immediately instituted a pastoral visitation. He observed with distress, wrote Panzavecchia in his *Storia di Malta*, a financial disorder in his diocese which had in this respect been neglected since the time of Bishop Alpheran and a horrible chaos in all the branches of ecclesiastical administration; but it was no little consolation to Labini to find that the moral state of the Clergy did not correspond to the unhappy picture which their enemies painted of them.

True it was that many of the Clergy buried in the 'casals' limited themselves solely to the practice of the liturgy and entirely neglected the theoretical studies which religion required of its ministers; and that the Cathedral Canons, largely drawn from the noble families of the Island, considered the mere nobility of their birth sufficient title to enter the higher ranks of the Church; yet many of the Parochial Clergy both in town and country and the greater number of the regular Clergy came to the support of the Bishop with their sense and understanding. 'The Clergy of Malta', wrote Labini in his report to Rome, 'have been described to me as an ignorant Clergy, but having subjected them to a vigorous examination I have found that they have a sufficiency of doctrine and instruction; the Clergy of Malta have been described to me as an insubordinate Clergy; having issued my edicts I say I have met only with obedience and docility'.

So in the words of the historian quoted 'he removed from the Confessional the less instructed; directed weekly conferences to be held in practical theology for everyday needs; promoted instruction in Christian Doctrine amongst the people; and by the fervour of his pastoral addresses and by the force of example insisted on the eradication of abuses'.

In particular Labini turned his attention to the training of candidates for the priesthood in Malta. Details of his reforms came curiously to light for English readers in after years in the 'account of the Seminary of the Bishop of Malta for the education of young priests for Holy Orders' drawn up by the Parish priest Don Luigi Fernandes for the British Commission of Enquiry in 1837 and published as a parliamentary paper. In this document are given 'the various rules and regulations, formed under the counsel and advice of several learned ecclesiastics and professors of medicine, which were observed with the greatest exactness during the time he was Bishop and during that of his successor Mgr. Ferdinando Mattei', and by which a vigorous course of studies and discipline of mind and body was imposed upon the young students.

In the year 1797 the See of Malta was raised to an Archbishopric, and Labini and his successors assumed also the title of Archbishop of Rhodes.

The Codice de Rohan remains a monument of the statesmanship of this Grand Master. It was a remarkable collection of municipal laws for his Maltese subjects, and as such deserves a place in the history of jurisprudence. Parts of this Code remained in force in Malta under English rule down to the year 1868.

CHAPTER V

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY AND DEPARTMENTS OF STATE AT MALTA

The Chevalier Bosredon de Ransijat—His Character—His Balance Sheet

THE reports of the Treasury to the Chapter General showed that the finances of the Order, from reasons which will be shortly mentioned, were very loosely conducted, and it was not easy to ascertain the financial position of the Order at any one date. The Chevalier Bosredon de Ransijat was, therefore, chosen by de Rohan, always a good judge of character, as Secretary to the Treasury with a free hand to place in order the 'Veneranda Camera del Comun Tresor'.

His Character

This Knight is worthy of a short sketch, both for his individual character as well as for the part he played in these last days of the Order, and we take the following picture of him from the memoirs of Doublet who was his very frank friend:

Bosredon was now about thirty-six years of age. He had studied little in his youth. Born in the mountains of Auvergne they had given him the surname of Ransijat, after a small property belonging to his father, and he always carried it, to distinguish himself from his two brothers, also members of the Order. He had been a page of the Grand Master Pinto and had come accordingly, at twelve years of age, to Malta, which he never left except for his sea cruises. He long kept the crudeness of his country home, and especially the obstinacy of mind, *entêtement des mulets d'Auvergne*, and when once he had adopted an opinion he held fast and furiously to it.

While a child at the Pagery, however, he developed a taste for mathematics and was passionately attached to geometry, and brought from these subjects into his speeches, meditations, discussions, and projects, the spirit of hypothesis and debate and calculation which he never gave up—not necessarily following correct hypotheses—but following and forcing conclusions to fit in with his headstrong views and inability to cede. His personal life was imprudent and improvident. He was heavily in debt from losses at play and was forced to obtain large sums from the public funds, and became dependent upon the bounty of de Rohan, who appointed him to the enjoyment of many magistral Commanderies. Yet he was a good administrator, working hard and reasonably on the exact science of the Exchequer, daily conferring with the Grand Master, the Chancellor, and other heads of the Government; he was indispensable to the working of the great machine of administration, and did his work so well and with such manifest pleasure, that in the morning he made one forget his irritating utterances of a previous evening.

His Balance Sheet

Bosredon began by introducing a complete new system of book-keeping and accountancy invented by himself; an invulnerable new system of audit; and a printed balance sheet issued periodically.

Speaking in a later year, 1789, of this printed balance sheet, he remarked that 'few Sovereigns have published a table of the exact situation of their finances'. He pointed out the genuine difficulty that existed in presenting the exact accounts of the Order, by reason of their diversity and multiplicity: 'The goods of the Order are spread through all the States that follow the Roman religion, where there are maintained a number of "caisses particulières"—twenty-nine in all, directed by a similar number of Receivers. These operate from Lisbon to Warsaw—and are charged with the collection of "responsions", "mortuaries", "vacancies", "spoglie", and "depropriamente" and other contributions of Knights . . . and both abroad and at Malta there are . . . foundations and investments entrusted to this Treasury, and lands, ships, and houses, all calling for separate books.

'The Revenues, too, come in different monetary form into Malta . . . there is a necessity for an exchange, and for the issue of money to the members of the Order abroad, so that the Treasury exercises the functions of a general bank, whose relations extend from one end of Europe to another.'

The reader must here remember that the Grand Master coined his own money in the 'Zecca' in Malta. This complicated matters further.

The 'bilan décennal' showed that the revenue coming to the Sacred Council at Malta in the year before the Revolution amounted in round numbers to 1,200,000 Maltese crowns, a sum of vast purchasing power in those days.

The Venerable Chamber of the Treasury was the General Office responsible for the due receipt and expenditure of this revenue. The titular head of this branch was the Grand 'Tresorier', or Preceptor, a position enjoyed as of right by a member of the Langue de Provence. The actual Board of the Treasury consisted of the Grand Marshal of the Langue d'Auvergne, who always presided, several Procurators, certain Grand Crosses named by the Sacred Council, and the Secretary to the Treasury appointed for life.

'The office of the Secretary,' runs an old document, 'was very considerable, of great fatigue and of great responsibility. He had an apartment in the Treasury. He arrayed and finished all the accounts in presence of the auditors. He gave and paid all the letters of credit and responded to all letters on finance, having a French, Italian, and a Spanish Secretary. All the affairs of the Treasury passed through his hands. His official salary was modest—three hundred écus per annum and some small commission on the purchase of the slaves by the Order.'

The Financial Secretary, therefore, kept going with the necessary funds, and called strictly to account the various official establishments of the Order at Malta, its embassies and political missions on the continent and the civil government of the Maltese people. Their large activities under these various heads may be seen in the reprint of their accounts for the years 1779–1789 given by the Knight de Boisgelin in his history of Malta. Some idea, too, may be gathered, from the details of expenditure, of the high standard of economic life reached in Malta under the rule of the Order and of the measure of financial indebtedness of the Maltese people to the Knights when we see their relatively small contribution to the central revenue. All classes in the Island found a constant and honourable livelihood in the employments of the Order.

Many beneficent schemes of social welfare, in addition to the Great Hospital, were maintained in Malta by the Treasury. This paternal government had also to import raw materials and the food supplies required by their own organization as well as by the Maltese people. To do this they employed their consular agents stationed on the continent.

The 'Camera Conservatoria' was another Board to whom certain receipts were entrusted, directed by the Grand Conservator, and this branch, with its own meetings, rules, and minutes, was responsible for all the actual coin in the hands of the Order, and also the valuable portable objects which in one way or another had accumulated through the centuries. The treasures included the silver and plate in use in the official buildings, many jewels and precious stones, and rare or curious objects, such as the ikon brought from Rhodes, the jewelled poniard and cross presented to La Vallette by the Pope, and the gold casque and stock likewise given to another Grand Master.

The personal income of the Grand Master now reached about £40,000 a year. It came to him partly from certain 'magistral commanderies' on the Continent, twenty-six in number, of which he enjoyed the entire revenue for life, and partly from the receipts of the Dogana at Valletta and other taxes which, as their Sovereign, he imposed on the Maltese people. These monies were received and administered respectively by a Receiver, who was a Knight, and by the 'Segreto', who was usually a Maltese of distinguished family. With this revenue the Grand Master maintained a household staff suited to his rank.

CHAPTER VI

AFFAIRS MILITARY AND NAVAL

The Congregation of War—A Foreign Legion—Duels—A Native Regiment—A Great Good Knight—The Fleet

IN ordering the levy of the Regiment of Malta, writes Doublet, the Chapter General also settled the Congregation of War. It was composed of the Marshal of the Order or his lieutenant, four Commissioners (Grand Crosses of different nationalities), the Seneschal, commanding the country-levy or militia, the Engineer-in-chief and Commissioner of Fortifications, the Commander of the Artillery, the Colonel and Quartermaster of the Malta Regiment, the Colonel of the 'Cacciatori', and a Judge Advocate for the application of the law in the case of a Council of War.

The responsibility of this Council covered the control and provision of the fortifications and batteries which defended the two Isles, and their augmentation or renewal; the manufacture of powder and saltpetre; the building and reparation of magazines; the storing and repairs of arms and arsenals or depôts; the armament, equipment, clothing and pay of the Malta Regiment and its location in four barracks.

One of its members, it is interesting to note, was the Bailli Hompesch, afterwards the Grand Master. This Congregation of War was still in power in 1798 when Bonaparte attacked the Island. To the 'absurd plan of active defence' which they adopted in 1792 and, later on, insisted on following, and to the 'blind confidence' which the Grand Master Hompesch placed in them, has been attributed the loss of Malta.

A Foreign Legion

The Regiment of Malta, as has been noted, was intended, amongst its other functions, to suppress any attempted revolt on the part of the people, and to be a pivotal factor in the governmental as well as the military control of the Island. The Grand Master experienced a great disappointment on its formation. It was anything but a success. According to plan, 1200 men were enlisted overseas, in Avignon, Corsica and Marseilles. This recruitment, though it cost the Treasury an enormous amount, was conducted in so careless a manner that instead of producing soldiers on whom the safety of the State could rest, it only produced deserters, vagabonds, and scallywags picked up in all the ports of the Mediterranean.

A Major Ferret was given command in its first years, but he was so indulgent and ineffectual that not a day passed but some of these disgraceful soldiers acted like brigands against the folk in town and country, and even against their own officers who were all Knights. De Rohan was forced, therefore, to find a new commander. His choice was another French Knight, the Chevalier de Freslon, major in the Regiment d'Hainault. This Knight was recalled from France and, to give him an enhanced authority, the Grand Master made him not only Colonel of the Regiment of Malta but also his Master of the Horse. He proved himself well worthy of the confidence which was placed in him.

At the very first inspection, de Freslon saw the source of the evil and, bluff Breton as he was, told Major Ferret what he thought. 'Each captain,' he complained, 'runs his company as he likes and takes no heed of the orders given for discipline and instruction by the commandant. The soldiers, seeing this, will not in turn obey the regulations any better. Also, the officers, save those who have served in France, have not the "military style" nor the right tone of command. Few know how to handle the weapons of the soldiers, or how to take a parade, or to supervise the drills.' De Freslon likewise reported all this to the Grand Master and declared, therefore, that he wanted express orders to require the officers to conform to the regulations already made, and, in particular, those requiring regularity and discipline, both in barracks and out of it, especially concerning attendance at parades, inspection of linen and boots and kit. The Grand Master at once assented to this request and signed an order of the day with his own hand.

Duels

At this, Major Ferret, his pride wounded by these frank criticisms, and considering his honour involved, sought out his Colonel and furiously demanded satisfaction, forcing him to fight a duel in his own house. De Freslon was so seriously wounded that he could not command his regiment for a time.

The Grand Master placed Major Ferret under arrest in his house, and, as time would be required to court-martial this officer, exercised his prerogative and commanded him to quit the Island on long leave. While the Colonel was kept an invalid indoors, a Chevalier de Fresinet, another French Knight, was appointed to act for him. This Lieutenant-Colonel, however, was also unsuitable for his task. He made daily reports from his quartermasters to the Colonel upon the regiment, but weakly gave in to his fellow-officers who still disregarded orders.

Though not yet recovered, de Freslon returned to active duties. He had much to endure. He found de Fresinet as difficult as Ferret and also fought a duel with him! The insubordination of the subaltern officers continued, even on parade. They openly laughed at and abused their Colonel, claimed as brother Knights to be exempt from his reprimands, and called his strict orders caprices! 'What a beautiful example,' exclaims Doublet, 'for these gentlemen to give to their soldiers . . . !'

Disgusted with this situation de Freslon tendered his resignation to the Grand Master and begged to be allowed to go back to his old regiment in France which he had left with much regret. But de Rohan knew his man and the needs of the situation. He refused de Freslon's request, dismissed de Fresinet, and declared in orders, that the first officer who refused to obey his Colonel would be brought before the Council of War and that a duel in such case would result in the degradation of the officer in the regiment and loss of rank in the Order. As to the rank and file, the Colonel could do what he liked with them.

Far from this order having effect, insubordination continued and hardly a day passed but some officer was placed under arrest. De Freslon, losing patience, with the authority of the Grand Master dispensed with the services of all the officer-Knights, transferring their duties to the sergeant-majors. No outcry was heard against this degrading punishment—such was the poor spirit of these Knights. In spite of all the drastic measures taken to establish severe discipline in the rank and file, the greater number of these foreign soldiers were incorrigible and the Colonel was forced to send many to the galleys and to dismiss others.

A Native Regiment

Finally he obtained the permission of the Congregation of War to allow him to recruit native Maltese instead of enlisting only foreigners, thereby reversing the original plan.

The execution of this measure did not meet with any difficulty; the new recruits were quickly found and cost only two-thirds the price, numbers of poor people were very happy to see a certain future assured to their children, henceforth well clothed, well nourished, and in the way of learning to read and write and cypher, and even, if they liked, to be apprenticed to a trade, for there was a master worker of certain trades appointed to the barracks as well as a teacher—all ideas of the new Colonel.

At the end of four or five years, this brave Knight had at length the satisfaction of seeing a regiment as well composed, trained, and disciplined as any French regiment. The officers themselves settled down to the new spirit and with the new recruits cherished the Colonel as a father.

A Great Good Knight

So the Bailli de Freslon enjoyed the full fruits of his indefatigable zeal and constancy, for de Rohan thought nothing too good for him. He was made a Grand Cross with a seat in the Sacred Council and endowed with the rich Commandery of Pieton. His intellectual tastes were appreciated, for he was appointed to the Library, which owes to him the acquisition of many of its best volumes in literature, poetry, and history of the eighteenth century. His nephew was given the 'généralat des gallères'.

Yet no jealousy was evoked—for he deserved his offices and filled them admirably. He was fond, indeed, of place and power, and his very ambition, which he never dissimulated, made him zealous for the dignity of the Order. He often was heard to exclaim: 'Ah, if I were Grand Master.' Sometimes he left nothing in doubt and said: 'When I become Grand Master, how many things I will change. . . . !'

'But'—writes Doublet—'it pleased God to take him away. . . . He never would have allowed the Order to perish, as did the unfortunate Hompesch. Providence wished to punish, and decided otherwise.' In all his public activities, de Freslon never forgot his vows as a Knight, and visited the sick in the hospital three times a week. In attending a dying soldier he became infected with a fever which, being neglected, also caused his own death. He departed this life on 22 May, 1786, aged 55 years.

The Fleet

As regards the fleet, the observations of Doublet give a sorry picture of its state at this period. A Congregation of the Galleys still met with formality, but the skill and morale of the Knights and crews of the galleys had declined.

There was really no need for the Order to put to sea in their great galleys, always unwieldy and laborious to handle, nor, if they did so, to maintain them at the standard of war strength or efficiency. They had been superseded, since 1701, in some degree by a small fleet of war-vessels which were directed by another Congregation of Knights, known as the Congregation of the Vessels.

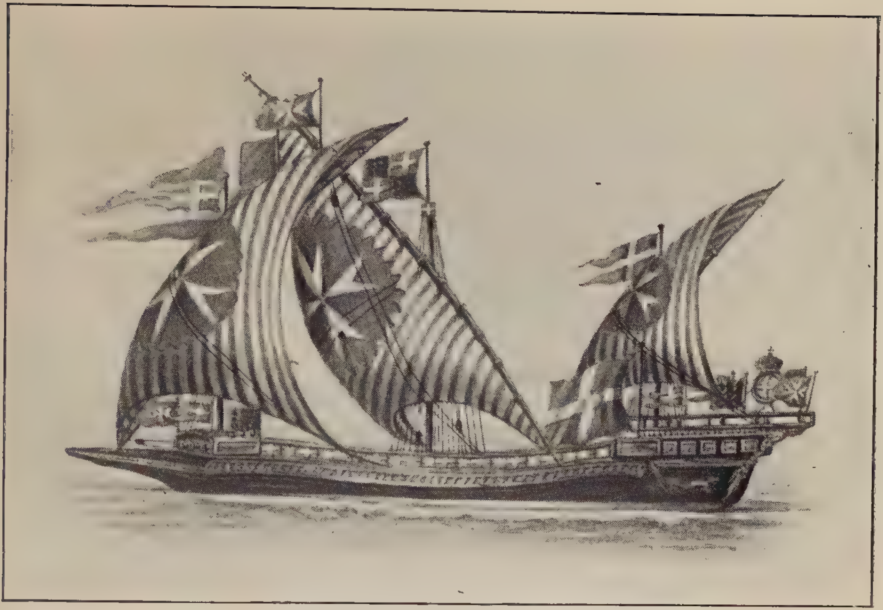
The principal duties of the fleet at this time were to protect the transport of supplies, 'responsions', donations, 'spoglie', and the like, to Malta, from the Continent, and, as the vaunted policemen of the Mediterranean, to safeguard the peaceful commerce of other nations.

The caravans, wrote Doublet, which the novice was required in other centuries to undertake, had consisted of at least forty days at sea, and the novice was required to have taken three such cruises in pursuit of the enemy corsairs, Turkish, Barbary, or Algerine pirates. This entailed great risks and great prizes.

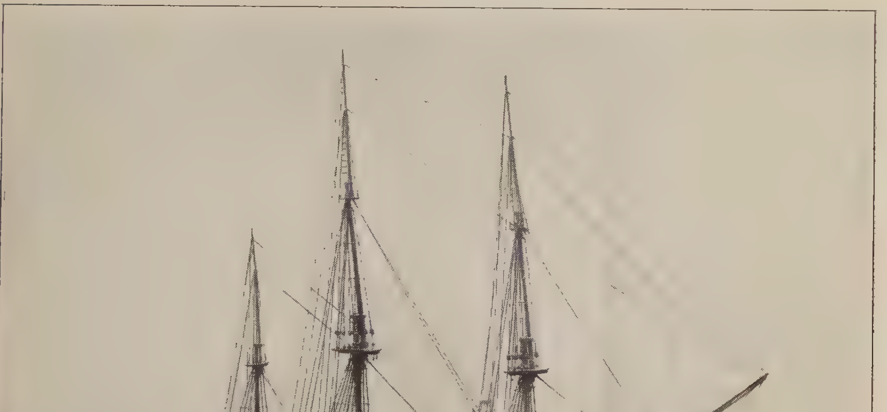
Now, however, these caravans by sea, in which the young Knights might have learnt something of discipline and have been strengthened by hardship, had become but pleasure cruises. A contemporary writer deplores the fact that the ships of the Order only put to sea in summer weather and the captains of vessels often declared on returning that they did not stop to attack any pirates they had seen because of the fatigue to be borne in the forty days' quarantine in the harbours of Valletta which the successful taking of a prize would entail. So one heard in their tales of the sea, not exploits of bravery, but details of 'fêtes galantes' and sporting expeditions enjoyed during their cruise in the different ports of Sardinia or Sicily.

No serious systematic effort, indeed, appears to have been made in the eighteenth century to give instruction in the elements of naval warfare to the young novices.

'How many young men,' deplores Doublet, 'has one seen arriving from the heart of their province who have been embarked a day or two after their arrival without the slightest idea of the use of a sword, or a rifle, or of the least term of navigation, to say nothing of a knowledge of swimming! And when they were not at sea, what were the activities of these young Knights or their older officers? Walking up and down the piazzas—sitting in the cafés—drinking, playing at billiards or cards, and getting into debt; running after women; rioting—quarrelling and duelling with resulting homicides.'



GALLEY OF THE GRAND MASTER, USED BY DE ROHAN



EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FRIGATE OF THE ORDER
(Model used for instruction of Novices.)

To face p. 110

Doublet, with a vision superior to that of his colleagues, outlined for his Grand Master a scheme of instruction for these young Knights. There should have been, he suggests, at Malta a large public school of navigation, subsidized by the Order, in which the young Knights might have been trained in seamanship under their own skilled commanders chosen from each Langue, 'not only,' as he naïvely puts it, 'to be able to beat the enemy, but to have some necessary notions of sailing when about to entrust their lives to such a dangerous element as the sea.

'The studies of the young Knights should usefully have included advanced geometry, marine geography, astronomy, experimental physics . . . the arts of fortification, attack, and defence . . . to produce a pepper-pot of good officers and leaders of men.

'They should have considered the young men, of the class of servants-at-arms and lay-brothers, to make them also educated and efficient. They should have extended this instruction to those who, amongst the young Maltese, belonged to families who supported the Order.'

De Rohan, indeed, added chairs of navigation and higher mathematics to the University, but the technical college, desired by Doublet, never came into being. This effort towards efficiency would have made, in a new orientation, not only better Knights for the Order, but, on their return to their homes, better citizens in their own country.

Years after, when the Order had perished, Doublet wrote: 'What Sovereign of Europe who, appreciating the value of such an establishment, would not have esteemed, considered, and protected the Order more than ever in his States? Ah, if such a school had been in being when Bonaparte had arrived at Malta, the Knights would not have surrendered so ingloriously.'

CHAPTER VII
UNREST ABROAD AND AT HOME

A Warning—Inter-Racial Unrest in Malta—An Ancient Law and its Results

DE ROHAN met, as did his predecessors, with many troubles in the relations of the Order with foreign Powers.

The position of the Knights entrenched in their Commanderies came to be regarded with growing dislike in Italy and Austria. Even France resented the presence of the fleet of the Order in the waters of the East, as it conflicted, it was said, with the interests of French merchants in Smyrna and other ports.

This unpopularity was, no doubt, partly due to the new spirit of nationality which resented the immunity of the Knights from local laws, partly to jealousy, and in many places to the provocative conduct of individual members of the Order. Whatever the cause, it was a very real thing. Complaints came to the Grand Master from the Courts of Europe that the Knights were impossible to deal with. The words of the Prince de Kaunitz, the Minister of the Emperor Joseph II of Austria, to the Envoy of the Order, evidenced the situation, 'Reform yourselves or we will reform you'.

It was not only abroad that this difficulty of dealing with the Knights appeared.

The Grand Master himself experienced an unruly spirit within the Order. The restlessness of the times was in evidence. De Rohan had sought to extend the power of the Order by the institution of a new Anglo-Bavarian Langue, and attached to it the ancient dignities of the Turcopilier and the Bailiff of England. Various Langues had enjoyed these dignities since the suppression of the Langue of England during the Protestant Reformation. The loss of these honours was resented by the French Langues. The Six Grand Priories of France, in their provincial chapters, criticized and opposed this new arrangement and even went to the extent of bringing a case against their Grand Master to the Courts of Rome. On the loss of their case, the insubordination in the French Priories continued. The Abbé Boyer, a priest of the Order, was one of the ringleaders.

The Grand Master was forced to take disciplinary action. He degraded certain Knights, sent others out of Malta to coventry to their Commanderies and so quelled the disturbance. As in most of his troubles, de Rohan retained a sense of humour, and in a personal letter to his friend the Bailli de Suffren, now Ambassador at Paris, in telling that he had silenced opposition, he wrote: ‘l’Abbé Boyer ne boye plus’—the Abbé Boyer barks no more.

Two incidents that will indicate this spirit of unrest may be described in fuller detail, one showing an inter-racial tension arising between the Knights and the Maltese people, the other the result of an out-of-date law. For these, Doublet is again our authority.

Incident of Inter-Racial Unrest between Knights and Maltese

The office of Prior of the Conventual Church of S. John was one of great dignity, and when, in the year 1784, the Prior Mainardi died, two names came up for consideration in the ‘Sacro Consiglio’. One was the priest Menville, Auditor of the Grand Master. Born in Malta, he had been a member of the Order since his youth, and had filled various offices as a chaplain, but he was now very old, feeble of speech, and wizened in figure and really not fit for the majestic exercises of the choir or the pontifical functions of the celebrant on festivals in this great church. The other was the Vice-Prior of S. John’s, the priest Lombard, a Frenchman of the Langue of Provence—the very reverse, in his thirty years’ service, of the Maltese candidate. The three French Langues, as might be expected, supported this candidate.

The priest Menville, however, was supported in his application by the Langues of Spain, Germany, Italy, by the newly formed Anglo-Bavarian Langue, and, as was to be expected, by the most distinguished persons amongst the Maltese themselves. Violent sides were taken and stormy scenes preluded the session of the ‘Sacro Consiglio’ at which the appointment of the new Prior was to be made. De Rohan, angered with the French Langues by reason of their recent insubordination, is stated to have supported the Maltese candidate.

The ‘Consiglio’ proceeded to an election, and Menville was appointed, but by a majority of only one vote.

After his election, Menville was decorated with the Grand Cross, and took the usual oath at the feet of the Grand Master in full Council. While this was taking place, the antiracial feeling of certain Knights who were present against the Maltese priest prompted them to cry out: 'Down with the circumcized, the Saracen, the Mohammedan', wishing to indicate that, being a Maltese, the new Prior or his ancestors must have descended from some Jew, Turk, or Moor who had married a Christian—all in this particular case, Doublet assures us, untrue.

Menville, according to custom, now quitted the palace, and passed across the 'piazza della Tesoreria' and along the narrow street leading to the church of S. John, there to change into pontifical robes, sing the *Te Deum* and give Benediction, in thanksgiving for his election. The members of the Council, including his enemies, accompanied him. The Grand Master, who remained in the Palace, fearing an attack upon the new Prior, as he pursued his way on foot, ordered all his officers to go with him for protection.

The church was filled with Maltese. The Knights opposing Menville ranged themselves in the two side chapels of S. Paul and S. Sebastian nearest the high altar and without any respect for the sacred place, or the relics there lying, or even for the Sacred Host which was about to be taken from the tabernacle, began murmuring against the venerable priest with blasphemous phrases. Some even proposed in words to murder him at the foot of the altar. The Maltese present were naturally enraged against the insults to one of their own people and to the holy place.

At this juncture the Chevalier de Freslon once again showed his worth, and by a personal act averted a tragedy. He saw, by the rising anger of the Maltese, that they were ready to fall on the seditious Knights on the least movement they might make against the person of the Prior. He gave a quiet word of warning to the more audacious of his colleagues, took them by the arm and, bidding the others follow, he induced the crowd of Maltese to make way and conducted these Knights in safety out of the church—leaving them to cool their feelings in a convenient café on S. John's Square. The other Knights remaining in the chapels, realising the situation, restrained themselves and the service proceeded.

When the crowd came out of the church, murmurs against the Knights arose on all sides. 'What a set of unbelievers, of men without religion! Did you hear their bloody threats! Well for them they didn't do anything, we wouldn't have let one of them escape!'—thus exclaimed the Maltese.

For eight or ten days Valletta was in a ferment. The party of Knights opposed to Menville openly acted in insubordination. Odious caricatures and epigrams were placarded on the doors of those who supported the Grand Master and the new Prior. The police refused to act, remembering the treatment given them by the young Knights out of hand, in an affair in the reign of Pinto, when their chief, the Gran Visconte, was seized, maltreated, stripped, and placed on an ass backwards, face to tail, and taken in procession round the town, from which injuries he died. Tardy justice, it is true, was obtained and a Knight was imprisoned for life.

De Rohan, afraid of a growing unrest, dealt leniently with this tumult, and allowed the offenders to quit the Island quietly, to avoid a scandal which might be prejudicial to the Order. But this leniency was ill-advised in the event. It was considered a sign of weakness by the turbulent Knights and it increased among the Maltese the sense of their inferiority in relation to the Order.

An Ancient Law and its Results

Six years later, in March 1790, a second cause of unrest arose out of the following incident.

An ancient and barbaric law punished with death anyone not of the Order who dared raise a hand against a Knight—even in self-defence. Though this law had become in a sense a dead-letter, its passive presence on the Statute Book was typical of the feudal servitude in which the Maltese people stood. In this case, as will be seen, it made an atrocious murder possible.

Captain Segond was a Frenchman, an officer in the merchant service, who lived with his parents in Malta. His family were well known to the Foreign Minister at Versailles, M. de Vergennes, who had met them in his travels to Constantinople and had helped Segond in his career. A dispute arose between Segond and a Neapolitan Knight, the Chevalier Mazzacane, concerning a woman, and the Chevalier determined to be avenged upon his rival. The Knight, therefore, awaited the captain on the Marina in Valletta, beside a fountain where he knew the officer must disembark from a boat coming from Il Borgo, the city on the other side of the harbour.

With a drawn sword hidden under his coat, the Chevalier walked up and down from the Custom House to the Church of Notre Dame de Liesse scanning all the boats arriving from the other side. At length he saw Segond and ran at him sword in hand. It was raining a little at the time; Segond had in his hand his umbrella, of waxed silk, unopened. Seeing himself assailed, he cried out that he was unarmed and tried to parry with the handle of his umbrella the furious blows of his assailant. More than a hundred boatmen and porters in horror regarded the unequal combat, but not one of them dared—so strong was the tradition of the law above mentioned—to disarm the Knight. The shops and offices were open at the time, and Segond, already wounded, in retreating towards the hill of the Porta Marina, tried to reach a doorway for refuge, and would have succeeded, but his foot slipped and he fell on his knee, in which position he still fought for his life with his silk umbrella. Overcome, he sank on his back, and his assailant, pouring invectives upon him, killed him brutally with a stab in the heart, repeated many times in the same wound. Tired rather than satisfied, the Knight withdrew, hiding his blood-stained sword beneath his coat.

Mazzacane was in due course arrested in his home and imprisoned in Fort S. Elmo. The law was clear and should take its course. The Knight was tried and condemned to death. But the Italian party was so strong in the 'Consiglio' that they succeeded in getting a majority of votes in favour of the commutation of the sentence to twenty years' imprisonment.

This judgement naturally angered the Maltese. The Knights who voted against the extreme penalty could not leave their houses for many days without being pointed at and called assassins.

The mother and family of Segond were unable to gain a hearing from the authorities. It is interesting to note that no words were uttered against de Rohan personally, who, it was felt, had done what he could to secure justice, and the relatives of Segond refrained, remarks Doublet, from any act of vengeance.

Soon, however, hundreds of letters left Malta telling a tale of feudal violence, and the Grand Master, knowing how the crime would be received in France, where the National Assembly was abolishing aristocratic privileges, instructed his Ambassador in Paris to assure the Foreign Minister, M. de Vergennes, that none of the French Knights on the 'Consiglio' need be reproached as to their conduct.

This incident, with that of the affair of the Prior Menville, made the words of Mannarino—still in prison in Valletta—remembered by the Maltese people.

CHAPTER VIII

KNIGHTS HOSPITALLER TO THE END

Knights Hospitaller to the End—The Great Hospital—A Mission of Mercy—The Lamp of Charity

THE Order was faithful to the duties of 'Hospitality' to the end of its days in Malta.

The Sacred Infirmary was originally situated in Vittoriosa. The Great Hospital in Valletta was begun in 1674 and completed in its present form in 1712. Large sums from the Treasury were spent by succeeding Grand Masters in its development. Its final proportions were remarkable. The great ward was 503 ft. in length internally, 34 ft. 10 in. in width, and 30 ft. 6 in. in height—one of the grandest interiors of its time.

All foreigners without distinction of country or religion, together with the inhabitants of Malta and Gozo, were entitled to be admitted into this hospital. The average annual expenditure upon this establishment from 1779–1788 was nearly £8000, a sum of great purchasing power at that time. In 1796, when the Order was reaching its lowest ebb financially, the Treasury still was able to find £6000 for its upkeep.

It was renowned in many ways. Against an English writer, Howard, who in 1789 was critical of its efficiency, a number of other writers and a vast amount of evidence showed that it was well abreast of its times from the scientific point of view, and that from the religious standpoint this great hospital was ably fulfilling, with a multitude of other activities in Malta, the great function of a centre for corporal works of mercy.

An Englishman, Henry Teonge, chaplain to H.M. Navy, in his diary under the date of August 1675, has written:

> ''Tis so broade that twelve men may with ease walke a brest up the midst of it, and the beds are on each syde standing on four yron pillars, with white curtens and valleands and covering, extreamly neate and kept clean and sweete. The sick served all in sylver plate and it contains

> above 200 bedds below, besyde many spatius rooms in other quadrangles with it, for the chief cavaliers and Knights, with pleasant walkes and gardens and a stately house for the chief doctor and other attendants.'

Sandys, later, writing about Malta, corroborates this and adds, 'the attendants many, the beds overspread with fine canopies every fortnight having a change of linen, served they are by the junior Knights in silver and every Friday by the Great Master himself, accompanied with the Great Crosses: a service obliged unto them from the first institution and therefore called Knights Hospitallers'.

Later, there came in 1735 to Malta a curious Englishman—an Edward Brown, on his way to the East on business with a potentate in the Barbary States, who gave his impressions of the Great Hospital, 'in truth, the very glory of Malta. . . . : Here the sick are provided for much better than they could be in their own homes . . . every patient having two beds for a change and a closet with a key to himself. The sick are served by the Knights in person and their diet is prescribed by the Physicians and brought up in silver dishes. . . .'

The statutes and regulations governing this hospital were numerous. The Chapter General of 1631 reviewed the whole situation and laid down the duties of the Knights and the administration of the hospital—following old-time traditions in the service of '*Li Signori Poveri Infermi*'.

The hospital was under the charge of the Grand Hospitaller who was the Piliere or head of the French Langue. The administration was divided into the civil, the economic, and the spiritual. The civil was entrusted to a Knight styled 'Commander of the Infirmary', and was the active force—though nominally responsible to the Grand Hospitaller.

The economic management was in the hands of four Knights called 'prodomi' or 'prud hommes', who were responsible to the Treasury.

The spiritual division was under the care of the Prior, assisted by a Vice-Prior of the Infirmary, who was required to be a Maltese, and eight priests of obedience, who gave spiritual aid to the sick. He had the power and privilege of writing the last wills of the sick, cared for in the infirmary, provided those wills were drawn up in the presence of two witnesses. For this reason the Archives at Malta to-day comprise many testaments, not only of the inhabitants, but also of many foreigners who had been admitted to the hospital.

The medical treatment of the hospital was conducted by a competent staff of experts. They were mainly, it is interesting to note, Maltese; though naturally the Order attracted doctors from the continent. To maintain an adequate supply of doctors, the Grand Master Cotoner had founded in 1676 a school of surgery and of anatomy. This was a feature in the intellectual development of Malta in this last period. Medical degrees were, in due course, in the time of Pinto, given by the University of Studies. Maltese intellect was recognized. Scientific writings were produced—some printed, some in manuscript. Notable amongst these pioneers of progress is the name of a Dr. A. Zammit, who has left behind him a quantity of manuscript notes and treatises.

In de Rohan's time the higher staff included a 'Prattico', four 'Chirurghi', a 'Maestro pella Pietra e Catarretta', a 'Maestro di Fisica'.

During the last years of his reign de Rohan created a special congregation of the hospital, consisting of the Grand Hospitaller and a committee to look after all the varied interests concerned.

The regulations of the hospital were from time to time settled by these authorities and printed, and some have found their way to the Record Office in London. Copies of these documents are still preserved in the Archives at Malta.

Minute records were kept. In 1787, provision was made for 680 patients at a time. Personal details of all patients were to be entered 'in the large book on the small table in the hall'. All the prescriptions given by the doctors were 'to be written out in full, without abbreviations, in a special book'.

To the hospital proceeded, at a given signal from the bell of S. John's, the young Knights from the Auberges, 'to assist in the great school of charity open to patients of all creeds and classes', the Langues dividing the daily duties of the hospital between them.

Lecky has remarked the interesting fact that this great hospital, in advance of the times, tried, on scientific lines, to treat and cure the insane.

A Mission of Mercy

The violent earthquake which destroyed Calabria and Sicily in 1783 gave the Knights a signal opportunity to fulfil their hospitaller functions. The following graphic narrative is given by the Knight de Boisgelin who assisted in the relief expedition sent by the Grand Master:—

Intelligence of the dreadful ravages caused by an earthquake in Calabria and Sicily, where Messina and Reggio were entirely destroyed, being received in Malta between six and seven in the evening, orders were immediately given to prepare for sea the galleys, which at that season of the year were already laid up in ordinary. These were fitted out with a degree of diligence and speed, which plainly proved that a much superior motive to that of mere obedience actuated those who were employed on the occasion. During the whole of the night, both master and slave, officer and soldier, worked indiscriminately on board; and the following day they were ready to set sail, provided with everything which could possibly contribute to the relief of people in such disastrous circumstances. The most able surgeons belonging to the Order embarked on board the galleys, taking with them twenty chests filled with medicines, two hundred beds, and a great number of tents. They arrived on the flat shores of Calabria at the close of the day, and cast anchor in an open bay. The dreadful consequences of the earthquake extended to more than the distance of sixty miles. Repeated shocks continued to be felt every day, attended by new calamities, and inspiring constant terror. The Calabrians and Sicilians were not only in continual danger of being buried under the ruins of their habitations, but had every reason to apprehend that they should be swallowed up either by sea or by land, both of which presented the most dreadful abysses. Mountains and rivers had entirely disappeared; and the couriers, who were dispatched to Naples, were surprised to find plains in the place of the former, and impassable torrents where there had scarcely been a rivulet. The unfortunate inhabitants of a small village near Silla, thinking to escape the dangers which threatened them on every side, put to sea; but were presently swallowed up by the raging waves, which, rising mountains high one moment, sank down with equal precipitation the next. These terrible accounts were sufficient to alarm the Knights, whose galleys were anchored near the land, in a place which afforded a shelter. A moment afterwards their ears were struck by cries from the shore, imploring assistance; at the same instant the sea was agitated in the most extraordinary manner, and the galleys experienced a motion entirely novel, but which was occasioned by the shocks felt on land. They immediately removed to as great a distance as possible, without, however, weighing anchor. The rest of the night passed without any further alarms, and they impatiently waited the dawn of day, in order to disembark the different articles intended for the relief of Reggio; after which they purposed quitting this perilous coast. The morning at last appeared, and with it the most dreadful spectacle imagination can possibly portray. The heart-rending scene is always impressed on the writer's memory, and he felt himself totally unequal to describing the horrors it presented.

The shore was lined by a great multitude of men, women, and children, half-naked, pale, and worn out with fatigue. In the midst of these miserable objects stood their reverend pastor, who appeared like a tender parent surrounded by his children: such, indeed, was the respect paid him by his flock, that, notwithstanding their distressed situation, they forbore pressing on the venerable man so dear to their hearts.

The General of the galleys having acquainted him with the purpose of his visit, and the assistance he had to offer the inhabitants of Reggio, this worthy prelate, though he was obliged to provide for the necessities of fifteen thousand persons (two hundred of whom were grievously wounded), was so well persuaded that charity should never be exclusive, that he himself made an exact division of the different articles between his own people and the inhabitants of Messina, forty thousand of whom he knew to be in the greatest distress. He moreover insisted on their being equal partakers of the benevolent assistance offered by the Order, and accordingly took only fifty of the beds, four medicine chests, a few tents, and some rice. The Knights, having placed these articles in the hands of the venerable prelate, reimbarked amidst the acclamations of the Calabrians, who offered up repeated prayers for their safe arrival at the place of their destination.

They passed the Pharos in a very short time, and cast anchor at an early hour in the Port of Messina, where they perceived only a few soldiers, and scarcely any Sicilians on the magnificent quay. Hardly any traces remained of the surrounding splendid edifices. There was a large chasm in the stonework of the beautiful citadel; and only a single wall was standing of the cathedral, which appeared to overlook the ruins of the different houses, not one of which remained entire. The neighbouring country, covered with crowds of people, presented the idea of troops of wandering Tartars, who had made choice of that spot for their temporary residence. Such were the objects which struck the astonished sight of the Knights before they were allowed to land.

The General of the galleys sent to the Neapolitan Commandant, and offered the same assistance already afforded to Reggio; adding, that having heard there were numbers of sick and wounded, he would establish an hospital, which in a very short time would be fit to receive five hundred patients. The Neapolitan returned a polite answer, saying, that the King his master having provided for the most pressing wants of the inhabitants, he must decline accepting his offers till he had written to the viceroy of Sicily, who resided at Palermo.

From this reply the Knights had every reason to believe their Sicilian majesties had cast a paternal eye on their subjects, and relieved their distresses; they therefore prepared to return, as soon as possible, to the inhabitants of Reggio.

But who can describe the astonishment of the Maltese, when they landed to visit the commandant, and passed round the walls of the city, which no one was permitted to enter without a guard of soldiers, to find themselves surrounded by an immense crowd of miserable objects. They were received in an extremely large barracks built of wood, divided into different apartments, richly furnished, and were presented with refreshments of the most delicate kind; all the surrounding objects seemed calculated to inspire pleasure. The commandant put an end to the audience, by advising the General of the galleys, who had communicated to him his intentions, to return to Reggio, there to await the answer to the dispatches sent to Palermo.

Nothing could possibly be more striking than the contrast between this kind of palace and the miserable habitations which surrounded it. The unfortunate people of Messina had constructed, at certain distances, different hovels. The surgeons were permitted to dress the wounds of some miserable beings who were at a distance from the rest; and the commandant could not prevent alms being privately bestowed on several of these unfortunate objects. The writer's post on board the galleys frequently obliged him to accompany the surgeons, in order to inspect the application of different remedies, and the distribution of the necessaries sent for their relief. This gave him an opportunity of witnessing scenes which he scarcely dared present to the reader.

Provisions, as has been already mentioned, were at first privately distributed among the sufferers; and so great was the multitude of people who continually presented themselves to partake of them, that it was absolutely necessary to decide on some plan to prevent so great an inconvenience. The galleys near the quays were constantly assailed by crowds who braved the strictest prohibition against approaching them. These disorders, were, however, at last prevented; and permission obtained to distribute soup, meat, rice and bread, freely and indiscriminately to all who should present themselves at a fixed place and hour. The Knights were always present on this occasion, and distributed the provisions with their own hands. This employment was, however, attended with some difficulties and many unpleasant circumstances, which the cruel situation of the sufferers could alone induce the Knights to support.

Let the reader figure to himself twelve or fifteen hundred persons pressed by famine, crowding impetuously close to immense cauldrons and large baskets, the contents of which thirty or forty Knights were endeavouring to divide in the most impartial manner; and he will not be surprised that they were frequently obliged to make use of force to drive back the most importunate, whose avidity it was otherwise impossible to check.

Catania and Syracuse, which had fortunately escaped the havoc made by this dreadful earthquake in Sicily, were soon, if possible, in a still more deplorable situation, there being a total want of corn, not only in the above-mentioned towns, but in the surrounding country. Thus exposed to all the horrors of famine, they had not much reason to expect speedy relief from Malta, the fleet of which had been much damaged by the late long campaigns near Algiers, and on the coast of Spain, where it had remained after the Spanish vessels had retired into their own ports. The Treasury was likewise much exhausted by the enormous expenses of this expedition; yet, notwithstanding all these circumstances, no sooner was their distressed situation known at Malta, than the Grand Master sent off a large vessel laden with corn, and several boats with ship's biscuits to supply as soon as possible the immediate wants of these wretched people.

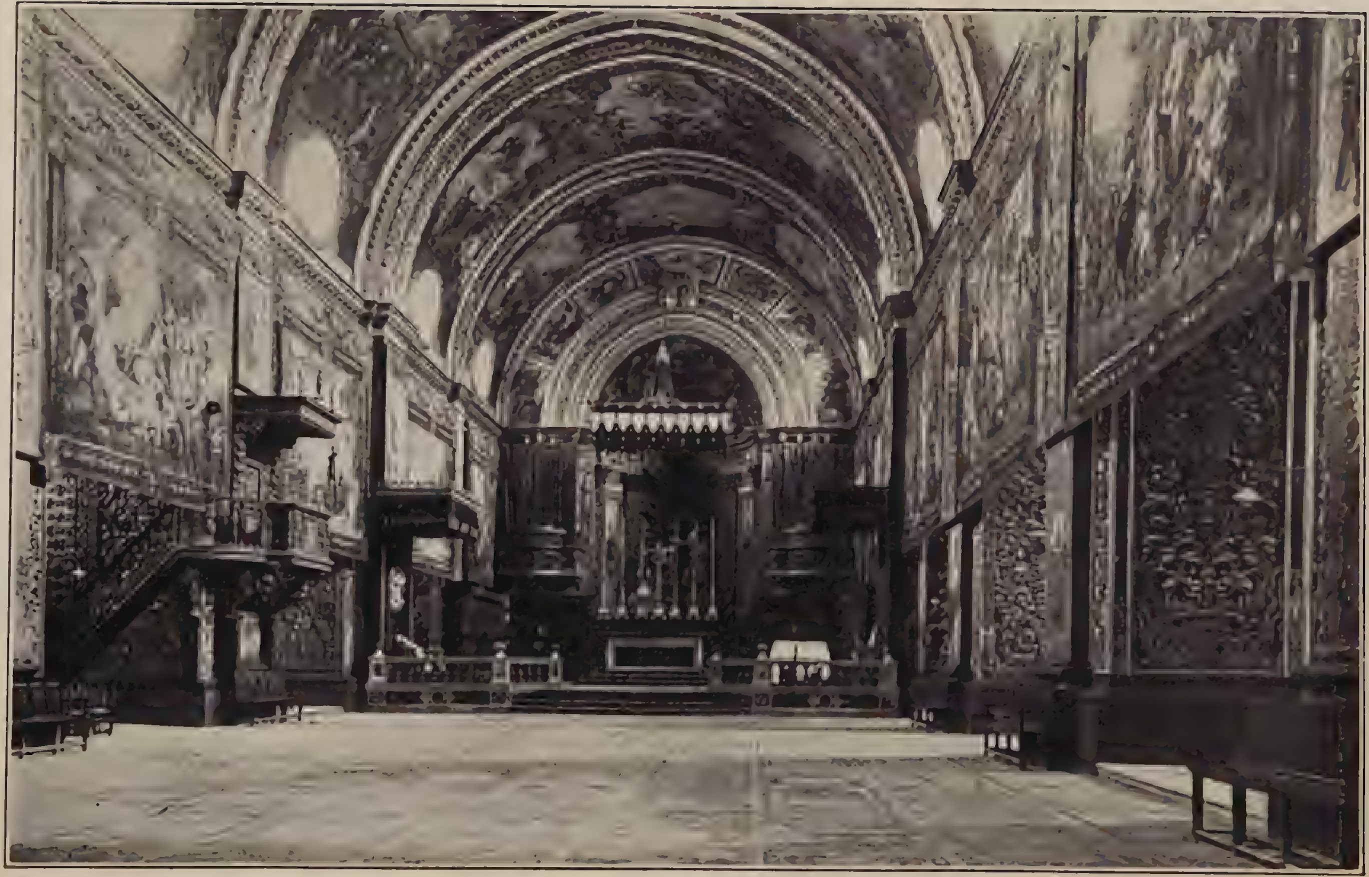
The Lamp of Charity

The lamp of charity was kept also burning, in de Rohan's reign, in the lonely island of Lampedusa. This place belonged to the Kingdom of Naples, but the Neapolitan Government found it too difficult to hold against pirates and marauders, and, as it was of no use to them, abandoned it.

It was a centre to which all sorts of seafarers went for shelter, including the corsairs themselves, glad to obtain the comfortable anchorage which it offered in stormy weather.

Here the Order maintained a small establishment, with a Priest of Obedience and six Maltese. They were rarely attacked by pirates, to whom on the contrary they gave firewood, game, ship's biscuits, cheese and even tobacco, and eau de vie. These commodities were gladly paid for in good coin by the recipients, who presented in turn the worthy priest with oil for the lamp which he kept lighted by day and night in the little chapel of the Blessed Virgin.

Yet the Maltese ran certain risks from their rough visitors. Once, indeed, pirates from Tripoli took the whole party off into slavery, but they were happily rescued by the French fleet.



CONVENTUAL CHURCH OF S. JOHN

Showing Tapestries and the Pavement, in various coloured marbles, of the Tombs of Knights.

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CHAPTER IX

VALLETTA IN DE ROHAN'S REIGN

Valletta in 1789—*Its Buildings—Religious Ceremonies—Parochial Life—The Palace of the Grand Master—His Household—The Grand Crosses—The Wills of the Knights*

NEVER, perhaps, did Valletta and the Three Cities present an appearance of such social magnificence or of such great wealth as on the eve of the French Revolution, despite the disturbing incidents at home and abroad as described. Malta, indeed, had become known through the Continent as a centre of culture and luxury. The French traveller speaks, for instance, of the good taste of the Knights and also of the Maltese nobles whom he met—the commander Dolomieu who had a 'charming cabinet of geological specimens', and who wrote ponderous pamphlets upon the weather conditions of the Islands; the collection of coins and classical remains of the Marquis Barbaro, and the pictures and books of the Abbé de Navarro. Contemporary writers, such as Brydone, remark the signs of health and affluence seen in the streets of Valletta in contrast with the condition of Syracuse and Messina. Society in the Islands is described as 'an epitome of all Europe, and one of the best academies of politeness in this part of the globe'.

Its Buildings

The natural charm and architectural grandeur of the great harbour have been described in many books and portrayed in many engravings. There were the historic forts of S. Elmo and S. Angelo, with the supporting lines of fortifications which a succession of Grand Masters had erected at the expense of the common Treasury or out of their own revenues. The fortifications, indeed, had passed long beyond the needs and the principles of defence. Forts Ricasoli, Tigné, the Cottonera lines were, for example, built not from any pressing military needs, but by individual Knights desirous to do something for their Order and to perpetuate their name.

The Order had beautified the Conventual Church of S. John from its floor of many marbles to its painted roof, bringing it almost to its present aspect, so that in its decoration, in its valuable altar plate and vestments it far surpassed the Cathedral Church of the Island at Notabile, and was equal to any in Europe.

There was the Bishop's palace in Sda Vescovo, with its spacious corridors and reception rooms, surrounding a fine courtyard, rebuilt by the masterful Baldassare Cagliares. Here on the left of the great entrance doors was the Curia Vescovile with its gloomy seats of justice from which the Vicar-General and his staff administered the canon law to the people of Valletta.

In the Castellania, in Sda Mercanti, a Grand Cross, assisted by two native jurisconsults, administered the civil and criminal law in the name of the Order, finding it often difficult, even with the help of the new code de Rohan, to do justice in the conflict of the laws of the Order with the Sicilian code or the ancient customary law of Malta.

There were the striking barraccas, roofed-in arcades, on the heights overlooking the Grand Harbour, ornamented and planted, where the Italian Knights gathered for conversation and recreation, as do the people of Valletta to-day.

From these heights across the harbour could be seen the Three Cities—Senglea, Burmola, and Vittoriosa with the arsenal, dockyards, and stores. Fashion was passing from them, the Knights, nobles, and richer merchants leaving these older quarters for more modern residences in Valletta, and they were being given over to the growing artisan class prosperously employed in the technical works of the Order.

In Vittoriosa, there still dwelt in great state in his palace the Inquisitor, Mgr. Scotti. In San Lorenzo, the parish church of this city, the Knights had held their Chapter General and Council meeting, in 1530, the first year of their occupation of Malta. Here, too, the public might still see, exposed to view on festa days, La Vallette's hat and sword in the Chapel of the Greeks recently restored 'joyfully and gladly' by de Rohan for this purpose.

Visitors had noted in both Valletta and the Three Cities the regular and well-paved streets; the water supply, excellent for those times, given to each house by the aqueduct of the Grand Master Wignacourt; the fountains and sundials which adorned the squares and corners of streets; and the gardens, Argotti, Sa Maison, and the Maglio, which gave pleasant shade in summer to the Knights and their friends.

Seven Auberges, due in their original conception to the genius of the Maltese architect, Girolamo Cassar, were, of course, unique features of Valletta. Of these Auberges, the French traveller quoted speaks—of the rich table appointments, the elegant tapestries and furniture, the pictures and frescoes illustrative of the glories of the particular Langue, by various artists—Preti, Favray, Albert Dürer and Caravaggio.

Religious Ceremonies

For the pious public there were many religious ceremonies, some conducted in accordance with the rules of the Order and others connected with the native Church of Malta.

The Conventual Chaplains of S. John's said their daily Mass and Divine Office in the majestic surroundings of their prioral church. They maintained a large choir, and the variety of the voices and the instruments employed, with the expenses, may be seen in the account books which remain.

The Prior of S. John's Church issued each year his '*Ordo recitandi Divinum officium*', including the '*Officia Hebdomadalia pro S. Jo. Baptista*', for use 'in the Greater and all the Conventual Churches of the whole Military Order', with a Calendar marking the feasts to be observed by the Brethren.

Originally, indeed, as the ancient rule put it, 'the prudence of our founders thought fit not to encumber the Knights with too many prayers which might have taken them from the holy works of Hospitality and the defence of the Faith'. Now, however, this Calendar of the Order contained, in addition to the Sundays of the year and all the days of Lent, some sixty Feast Days, when various services were held and sermons preached by the Prior and his priests in S. John's Church or elsewhere. The Knights and novices were required to attend these services or suffer severe penalties for their absence.

Malta was long renowned for its religious festivals, and these had lost nothing of their grandeur in this period. Amongst the most notable State Festivals, to which many members of the Order came from overseas, was the *Vittoria*, which was held each September in commemoration of the raising of the Great Siege. The Grand Master and other Dignitaries of the Order, with the Maltese nobles in their distinctive dress, attended a special service in the Chapel of Our Lady of Philermo. The Prior then carried in procession through the streets of the city, between lines of soldiers of the Order and to the salutes of the Batteries, a very ancient picture of the Virgin Mary brought by the Knights from Rhodes. On the Feast of S. John the Baptist the famous relic of the hand of the Saint was likewise carried from S. John's Church; and on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin the Bishop and Grand Master walked in procession from Valletta to Floriana, to the Church of the *Sarria*, to pray that the plague might be averted, in accordance with a pledge made by the Grand Master Cottoner in 1677.

Parochial Life

The churches of the parish, of which there were some forty-five in number, and of the Religious Orders, as distinct from those of the Knights, were also richly endowed and lavishly decorated. The Church, indeed, was said to hold one-third of the land in the Islands. A great dignity and solemnity had ever marked the ritual of the services, which were carried out in the fullest form of the Roman Breviary. They were attended with real devotion by the faithful native people.

Attached to these churches were an infinite number of confraternities for the laity, concerned with spiritual exercises or corporal works of mercy. Processions of these also took place. The statue, or relic, of the Patron Saint, and the banners of the guild, with many silver crosses and religious ornaments and emblems, were carried through the streets of the city or the casal, and were saluted on the route by bands or by the discharge of musketry. The procession usually ended with Benediction in the church. In the villages, a carnival on a small scale usually followed the religious ceremonies, and fireworks, an inevitable feature of a Maltese 'festa', closed the day.

Many of these festivals are still held in Malta; and some of the ancient confraternities, reaching back to the fifteenth century, fully function.

There was also the University, already mentioned, and the Bibliotheca for the more studious visitor; the latter was founded by the donation of a French Knight, the Bailli Guerin de Tencin, in 1763, and was being continually increased by the addition of the books of deceased Brethren which were sent to Malta by the Receivers of the various Priories abroad. It now reached 59,700 volumes in number. The duplicate volumes so received were sold to the public and the beginnings of many valuable private libraries in Malta were thus formed.

The Great Hospital has already been described.

There was a dark background to this scene in the several forbidding 'bagni', the buildings in which, with a multiplicity of doors and bolts, the large slave population were locked up each night to be released by day for their menial and arduous work in the service of the Order, or of such private owners as did not keep them in their own homes.

The Palace of the Grand Master

In the midst of this great city of Valletta dwelt the Grand Master in his Magistral Palace, described by the traveller Brydone as 'a noble, though plain, structure'. Here the Grand Master was 'housed more commodiously and more comfortably than any other prince in Europe, except (and the writer does not tell us why) the King of Sardinia'. This Palace, by the reconstructions of its successive occupants, had grown from the simple house, consisting of a reception-room and two bedrooms, surrounded by a dry stone wall, which had satisfied in the year 1569 the Grand Master Del Monte. It now included the suite of private apartments of the Prince, the large and small council rooms hung with the famous tapestries of Gobelins called 'les Teintures des Indes'—the present ballroom and the throne room. It contained endless corridors and ante-rooms decorated with pictures of Popes, of Sovereigns and of other patrons of the Order, as well as of Grand Masters and Knights and their exploits on sea and land. Guido Reni, Preti, Caravaggio and the French painter Favray had painted many of them. Frescoes by Mattia Perez d'Aleccio also adorned the walls.

In the middle of the Palace were two large courtyards, planted with trees and flowers, into which looked the loggias of the 'piano nobile'. Arcades surrounded these courtyards on the ground floor.

A remarkable clock, with an immense dial, showed, in addition to the hours, the phases of the moon, the days of the week, and the dates of the month. Coloured effigies of slaves with hammers struck the hours on gongs displayed on each side of the dial. These curious figures are said to have been brought from Rhodes. An observatory, recently erected, indicated the scientific tastes of the Grand Master de Rohan.

In the Palace itself were found some of the most vital departments—these included the 'Stamperia', where Fra Mallia, a Maltese, presided over the issue of official notices and other printed documents, and whence at any moment the Grand Master might issue his edicts; the four Foreign Secretariats, the

Latin, the French, the Italian, and the Spanish, so placed that correspondence with foreign nations might immediately be brought before the Grand Master in his private apartments or to the hall of the 'Consiglio'.

A small tower, reaching back to the days of the Grand Master Del Monte, also stood in the centre of the Palace, preserving the rare treasures of the Order—the poniard of La Vallette, diamond ornaments, and some relics. This tower was kept locked, the two keys of it being held, one by the Grand Master, the other by the Grand Conservator, who was usually by right of his position the Grand Commander of Provence.

In the adjoining squares were housed other important departments of the Order—the 'Cancelleria' on S. George's Square and the Treasury and the 'Conservatoria' on the Piazza del Cavalieri, within easy reach of the Palace.

His Household

The Grand Master was surrounded by a household and staff, appointed personally by him—'all very princely', to quote Brydone again—consisting of Knights and pages, servants-at-arms, domestic chaplains and seculars. Of the last mentioned, most were native Maltese. The Prince slept in the room which is now the office of his Excellency the Governor, and there may still be seen the tiled alcove for the bed and the religious mural paintings above it. In the days of Pinto two Turkish slaves of proved fidelity had slept in an adjoining room, placed there because of the constant fears of a revolt of the slaves, but in de Rohan's day one of the valets de chambre had taken their place.

The general arrangements of the Palace were in charge of the Seneschal, who was supported by the captain of the guards and his officers, the guard being housed in large guard-rooms on the ground floor.

Four domestic chaplains served the private chapel, now the room used by the Military Secretary, and here the Grand Master heard Mass and might in private read his Office.

A Grand Chamberlain, assisted by four chamberlains of the rank of 'servants-d'armes', waited upon the Grand Master when in the Palace.

There were sixteen pages, four being on duty at a time. These noble youths resided in special apartments in the palace in charge of a Conventual priest, the keeper of the pages, whose office must have been a strenuous one in handling a group of boys of five different nationalities.

Three auditors—Maltese of position—arranged the audiences which de Rohan gave daily to his subjects, both in the Order and among the Maltese people. An almoner, generally a Maltese priest, dispensed the Grand Master's private charities.

Twenty Knights and forty subaltern officers were attached for various supernumerary duties at the Palace.

For some centuries a band of sixty selected secular servants, 'famigliari', had been chosen and attached to the person of the Prince and were ever ready to come at short call to the palace in time of danger or other emergency.

A 'guardaroba' looked after the clothes and equipment required by the Grand Master. A maître d'hôtel arranged the service of food and wine, etc., and controlled the servants. A French chef presided over seven other chefs, French and Maltese, with a host of plate boys, etc., in the two great kitchens. A contemporary list[1] shows the huge staff of humbler servants employed. A number of 'technicians' were included in the household staff of the palace—plumbers, farriers, and painters.

A Master of the Horse arranged, when required, the daily drive. Large stables at the back of the palace in Sda Mercanti held fifty-two horses or mules, with corresponding equipages—calèches or coaches. The Grand Master descended from his apartments in the 'piano nobile' by a vast flight of steps, sometimes carried by his 'portieri' in his sedan chair, preceded by 'staffieri', or tip-staffs, who mounted behind his great coach or carriage.

The Grand Master could retire from the city to one of his three country palaces, Verdala, S. Antonio, or Selmun, and if the Prince or his suite were so disposed, a Grand Huntsman or 'Fauconnier' provided for shooting or the chase.

The Grand Crosses

The Grand Crosses resident in Malta lived on a scale of magnificence almost equal to that of the Grand Master. The most senior members of each Langue held, ex officio, certain high offices in the administration of the Order, with equally high emoluments and patronage. Where such Knights were very old, or absent, or did not desire to act, they were represented by a 'Luogotenente'. These Grand Crosses, or Conventual Baillis, as they were called, worked, and worked hard, in comfortable and well-appointed offices in the Auberges, or the other official quarters. They received a becoming deference, somewhat servile to our minds, from a staff of Knights or seculars who carried out the work of the branch. These grandees dwelt in a private house in Valletta, and often enjoyed a villa in the country. They had their carriages and sedan chairs, their mules and coloured slaves. An Intendant looked after their income and settled their accounts. Their household often included a domestic chaplain who served their spiritual needs in the private chapel of their house or villa; a skilled Maltese doctor looked to their bodily needs, and the local notary made their wills—in short they enjoyed, until the Revolution came, a life, if not of ease, at least of ordered calm, immune from the social and political anxieties, and sometimes physical violences, besetting a Grand Seigneur on the Continent.

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[1] Malta Archives 6406.

After the departure of the Order, many palaces in Valletta were converted into shops, blocks of flats, hotels or Government offices, but the transformed buildings were for long known by the names of individual Knights who had lived in them. The Palazzo Hompesch became Scicluna's Bank; the Palazzo Raimondi, the Admiralty; the Palazzo de la Salle, a school centre. In the country, likewise, the Villa Spinola, the Villa Parisio, the Palazzo di Blacas and the Palazzo di Vellin recalled the names of departed Knights.

The Wills of the Knights

The wills which the Knights were required to make 'in conformity with the praiseworthy and saintly custom of the Religion', give inventories of all their worldly goods. They reflect the glamour and glitter of society in Malta in the eighteenth century. From the long list of 'items' given, we can reconstruct a picture of a Grand Seigneur of the day, showing each detail from his costly clothes, his plate, and furniture, to his investments and even to his debts.

We learn, too, from the terms of these wills, something of the less material and spiritual side of the deceased Brethren, of their intense religious beliefs, of their characters, and of their social relations. They are careful to leave money for Masses to be said for the repose of their souls, sometimes for a period of three hundred years. The poor in the parish of their family home overseas or of their old Commandery had not been forgotten during their residence at Malta and abundant alms were left to be distributed amongst them. A liberal provision was made for their large staff of servants by the gift of a year's wages: their names are carefully given and their good service noted.

In the distribution of the fifth of their property which they were allowed to make 'by the kind permission of the late Grand Master, Perellos', their own kinsmen were not forgotten. Their friendly relations with their Maltese neighbours are seen in the many legacies given to Maltese priests, doctors, and other individuals.

Their intellectual tastes in life are seen in their solicitude for the fate of their books and manuscripts, their musical instruments, particular artistic possessions or historical souvenirs.

An exact management of their temporal affairs is shown in the statement of their accounts, in their punctilious instructions to their executors to pay their debts, which were often given in detail in the will.

The Knighthood of Malta at this period has been described by a recent historian as a body of 'tyrannical and dissolute reprobates'. In the wills of many of the Knights, made, not when they were old or infirm, but in full vigour, may be found a graver outlook on life than this sweeping denunciation suggests.

CHAPTER X

A MALTESE RENAISSANCE

Commercial Progress—A Literary Movement—'Malta Illustrata' —Abela's Task—A Lost Alphabet

THERE was every prospect, at the opening of the unhappy year 1789, that Malta was about to enter upon an era of internal peace and progressive development.

The thirteen years from 1776 to 1789 had been, under the rigorous personal direction of the new Grand Master, de Rohan, a period of social reconstruction. By the reforms so initiated the Maltese people could co-operate with the Order to their mutual advantage.

The violences and disloyalties of individual Knights, the friction between the Order and the Maltese people might well be considered but the backwash of the misrule of past Grand Masters, of the evil influences of Pinto, of the imprudent zeal of the rigid Ximenes. The hostility of Continental princes and sovereigns to the Knights, which has been mentioned, might be expected to vanish in the reformation of the organization which de Rohan had undertaken, and the democratic forces which were seeking to curb the powers of these same princes and sovereigns might find in the reformed Order an instrument of social progress wherever it was: in Malta, in Europe, in the New World.

De Rohan, amongst his reforms, paid great attention to trade and commerce. The Consular Tribunals were given effective powers. The tariffs upon imported goods and on clearances were very low in contrast with the high tariff walls of the greater States on the Continent; and the Islands, in consequence, presented business possibilities out of all proportion to their size. Proof that Malta was settling down, at this time before the Revolution, was found in the negotiations of important French manufacturers with de Rohan to establish a depot in Malta for the extension of their trade in the East. The new United States of America had also sent, it is said, an agent to Malta, and Maltese merchants had sent their ships to Philadelphia and even to Mexico and Peru, making considerable fortunes.[1]

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[1] De Boisgelin.

A Literary Movement

Historians have yet to appraise the work fostered by de Rohan in another sphere. Malta gave great promise of becoming a centre of marked intellectual activity. A group of writers drawn both from the Order and from the native Maltese had come into being and were producing in his reign many books which dealt with old themes in new ways, or added something to human knowledge.

Printing had been introduced into Malta by the establishment of a Press only in Grand Master Pinto's reign. The Government of the Order reserved to the end of their rule an exclusive monopoly in this respect, no other printing press being allowed to function in the Islands.[1] They placed, however, their press at the disposal of favoured individuals or those who were prepared to pay for its use, but they retained the full right to censor anything printed in it. Books printed on the Continent and imported into the Islands were also subjected to a censorship.

These restrictions were continued under British rule down to the year 1838 and formed part of the complaints of the Maltese against their new Governors in that later century.

The Order itself before the printing press arrived had usually sent their Statutes and official documents to be printed in some town in Sicily; and native Maltese writers had likewise sent their works to be printed abroad. A certain Hasciac, for instance, published in Rome, in 1623, a Description of the Grotto of S. Paul, and a Girolamo Borg, in the same city, in 1660, a Description of Malta.

The situation in the Islands was favourable to a literary output, comparable with that of the greater States on the Continent. For many generations the Maltese people, under the protection of the Order, had been spared invasions by foreign foes, civil wars, and the persecution of their religion. Malta thus gave that academic calm so necessary to most writers.

The materials of scholarship were also available. Long before the Order came, old manuscripts, early printed books, editions of the classics, histories and treatises, had been found in the houses of the Maltese and in the libraries of the great religious Orders such as the Augustinians, Dominicans or

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[1] Though a certain Pompeo de Fiore had obtained in 1642 the right for himself and his heirs to print for 20 years.

Franciscans who had been established in Malta since the Feudal days. Under the Order, books bearing the learning of the Continent also came in numbers into the Islands and reached the young Maltese student in many ways, through his teachers and the clergy, through individual Knights or his educated neighbours.

‘*Malta Illustrata*’

An impetus to a deeper comprehension of their intellectual heritage was to be given to the Maltese people by the publication, in the middle of the seventeenth century, of a remarkable work entitled *Malta Illustrata.*

This book was compiled by a noble Maltese, Abela by name. He had become a Conventual Chaplain, Commander, and finally Vice-Chancellor, of the Order. Malta, he found, had been mentioned in many writings of the past : but it still remained for a native writer to describe Malta from within, its local traditions, and all it stood for as a national entity. An encyclopedia of Malta was wanted, and to this task Abela set himself.

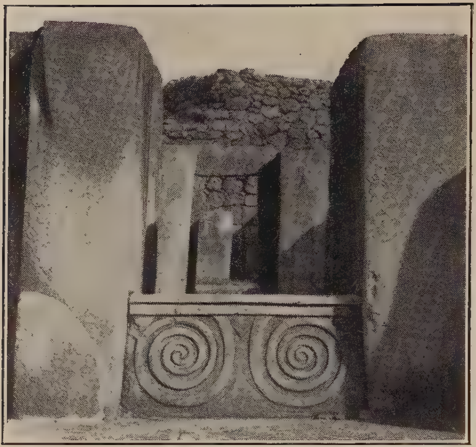
Abela's Task

Abela read and studied everything he could find written about his country from the earliest times down to the year 1635, at which date his history stops. He gave in his book an account from the then existing sources of the early inhabitants of Malta, the origins and development of its Christian Church ; its feudal rulers and its native Hakems ; and added his criticisms, with his unique native knowledge, of the accepted story. He gave biographies of many Maltese persons remarkable through the epochs—the saints, the scholars and the worthies of the Islands. He illustrated the whole with reproductions of the archæological and classical remains found in the Islands, many of which he had industriously collected, statues, coins, inscriptions in ancient languages, etc., and with maps and plans of the Malta of his day.

Malta Illustrata, written in Italian, was first printed in Malta in 1647 and reprinted in several later editions. Two German towns produced in the same century a Latin translation.

This encyclopædic production achieved its end. It placed Malta before the world by indicating the value of its individual life, which had been somewhat overshadowed by the greatness of the Order of S. John. It proved, from the time of its publication, a mine of information for many Maltese writers.

After Abela's day, and notably under de Rohan, learning



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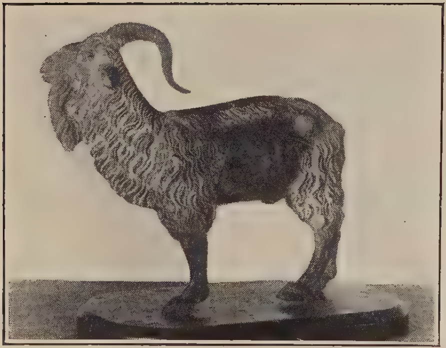

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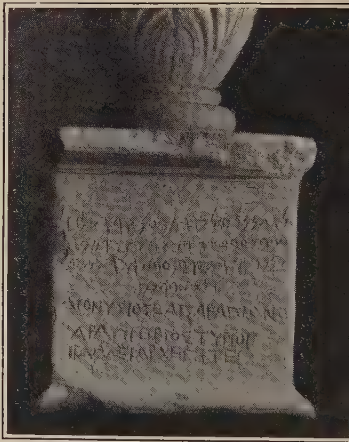

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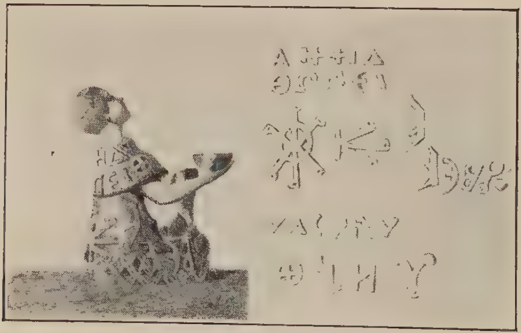

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ANTIQUITIES OF MALTA

1 Neolithic Temple at Tarxien (3000 B.C.) detail *in situ.*
2 Bronze Ram. From Grand Master de Rohan's Collection in the Palace, Valletta. Date unknown.
3 Phœnician Stela, with Greek Translation (Cippus). About Third Century B.C.
4 Mystic Bronze Statuette, also from Grand Master de Rohan's Collection.

To face p. 137

in Malta took a further specialised and critical form, and the printing press in the Palace in Valletta produced many books dedicated to this Grand Master.

De Rohan himself was interested in the classics, and formed a Museum of the marbles and bas-reliefs from the Greek and Roman remains in the Islands which savants were excavating.

A Lost Alphabet

The discovery of certain missing letters of the Phœnician alphabet was made possible through the intellectual activities of the Order in the following way.

Two stones had been found on the supposed site of the Temple of Hercules near the Marsa and had been placed in this museum. The *cippi* were at first believed to be candelabra; but were in reality the bases of two columns from an ex-voto shrine erected to Melkart by two brothers, Abdosir (in Greek Dionysios) and Osirxamar (Sarapion). The inscription was in both Greek and Phœnician. The savants of the Order appreciated its importance and plaster casts were sent to the French Academy, where they were analysed by the Abbé Barthélemy. Feeling this was not enough, the Grand Master decided to present one of the *cippi* themselves to the Academy and directed the Bailli de Freslon, now honorary Librarian of the Order, to send the gift with a communication in elegant French which showed that the Order took their great position of power and patronage very seriously.

'If the members of the Order of Malta,' wrote the Bailli de Freslon, 'are prevented by their duties from indulging to the full their taste for letters, they would like to feel that they can assist persons of rare intellects to important discoveries . . . and the Religion of Malta will give up with great pleasure to the Academy of Inscriptions any antiquities which it may be able to acquire, and in so doing will give a real proof of the homage it desires to pay to this distinguished body.'

So in Paris, in 1782, MM. Barthelemy and Arnaud on behalf of their famous 'Compagnie' received, with ceremony, from M. le Bailli de Breteuil, Ambassadeur de la Religion, the original inscription, equalling in importance the Rosetta stone, and from it the learned Abbé was able to reconstruct the missing letters of the Phœnician alphabet. The Bailli de Freslon was made 'as a mark of their thanks' a corresponding member of the Academy.

In Malta, a Marquis Testaferrata also examined and wrote in 1768 about the remains of the Temple of Proserpine; and the Marquis D. C. A. Barbaro wrote a general history of the antiquities of his country, published posthumously in 1794.

A large critical book, profusely illustrated, *Malta Antica*, told of the pagan cults of pre-Christian days, and reviewed the early Christian Church in Malta. Its author was a Conventual Chaplain, Honorato Brès; he was engaged upon the work when the Revolution came, and had to finish it in Rome, where he published it in 1816, dedicated to the Prince Regent.

The Knight Boisgelin, from whom we have quoted, commenced, during the French occupation, a detailed description of both Malta and the Order in the Eighteenth Century. He completed it in exile, and it appeared in London, in English, in 1804, dedicated to the British Navy.

Three features remain to be noted in the literary history of Malta under de Rohan. First, an ancient controversy was revived by a Benedictine monk, de Giorgi, a native of Ragusa, who ventured to claim, in a widely read book, that S. Paul had never come to Malta but had been shipwrecked on the Island of Meleda in the Adriatic. The scholars of Malta were now well equipped to refute the charge, and many of them wrote against the heresy. The matter was set at rest by a Maltese noble, Count Ciantar, who, in a series of books, established beyond reasonable doubt the claims of his Island to have received Christianity from S. Paul.

Secondly, the same Ciantar compiled a critical edition of Abela's work, with notes of his own as learned as those of the original author. The first volume was printed in 1778 in the Palace in Valletta; the second in 1780, and this contained a fine engraving of de Rohan, to whom it was dedicated.

Ciantar was made, like the Bailli de Freslon, as a tribute to his scholarship, a member of the Academy of Inscriptions in Paris, and Corresponding Secretary.

Thirdly, a fact of unique interest to us to-day, was the recognition of the Maltese language as 'a key to many locks'. By its aid could be studied more closely the local history and traditions of the Islands. These were valuable to historians of other countries, as they reflected many of the events of Western Europe from the days of the Roman occupation.

The Maltese scholar also possessed in his own language, in which he could write and think, a unique instrument with which to explore and understand the language, literature, customs and history of many peoples of the Near East and the prehistoric remains of parts of the Mediterranean littoral. In turn, the Maltese scholar, with his Western culture and his knowledge of modern science and all it stood for, could bring a progressive mind to an analysis of Eastern problems, either of the remote past or the living present, and communicate his discoveries to scholars on the Continent in an effective and useful form.

The value of all this, the savants of the Order were not slow to see. Individual Knights studied the Maltese language. One Knight, the Bailli de Neveu, was so proficient in his knowledge of Maltese, that he was said to be able to tell at once, by the varying accents, the particular district to which a native speaker belonged. Under the patronage of this Grand Cross and of other Knights, the Maltese scholars produced grammars and dictionaries, and sought out and wrote down all the local folklore and poetry they could find.[1]

It was with an appreciation of this unique power of the educated Maltese to understand Eastern nations very closely, that in 1740 the King of Ethiopia had asked the Grand Master, as is recorded in the minutes of the Sacred Council, to send some Maltese priests to his country to assist in its development; and that a foundation known as *Tal Iscof* had been made to provide a chair of Arabic for Maltese students in the University in Valletta. Even in 1796, when the Revolution had exhausted the resources of the Order, the Grand Prior of Ireland, Fra Carvalho Pinto, Vice-Chancellor of the Order, was busy about a scheme for the reorganization of this Professorship of Arabic, which he was then submitting to the Pope.

Two persons very different from each other stand out as students of the Maltese language. One was a Maltese priest of the Order, by name Agius de Soldanis, who wrote in 1750, under the patronage of friendly Knights, three works on the Maltese-Punic tongue, which he dedicated to his patrons with all the flowery phrases of a devotee of the ancient régime. This Abbé Agius de Soldanis was given charge of the Great Library of the Order. ‘He owed his appointment’ wrote the traveller de Non, ‘solely to an innate taste for the sciences. This very amiable young man, who has rendered very essential services to this Institution by his talents and activity, will one day perhaps become the father of Maltese literature.’

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[1] Notable collections on various subjects were made under this patronage by the Advocate Mifsud, the Doctors Zammit and de Marco, and others, which remain in manuscript in the Bibliotheca in Valletta largely unedited. The *Stromaton Melitensium*, a miscellany compiled by the first-named, reaches twenty-three MS. volumes.

The other was a Maltese professor, by name Michele Antonio Vassallo,[1] who also wrote some years later, in 1797, a remarkable grammar and dictionary of the Maltese language. He was content to dedicate his work, very simply, 'to his fellow-countrymen', with the words, 'Greeting and Fraternity'.

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[1] Born 5 March, 1764, at Città Rohan (Casal Zebbug).

PART III

The Order amid the French Revolution

REVOLUTION IN FRANCE

THE causes of the French Revolution were many—the times and places of its manifestations infinite, and the principal parts filled by more persons than are found in the cast of the longest drama. To meet the impoverished condition of the Treasury of the Kingdom and the movement in men's minds for some alteration in the form of government, M. de Calonne, the Minister of Louis XVI, summoned an Assembly of Notables at Versailles on 22 February, 1787, which sat on into the next year. This Assembly sought to save the situation and keep the progress of reform within constitutional and peaceful lines.

Such an Assembly had not met for nearly a century. Louis XVI had contemptuously dismissed the previous States General who had come before him to submit to the new laws, and to present humble petitions, praying, on bended knees, 'that they might be taxed with compassion'.

This Assembly of the Notables was to be the first of three conclaves of the French people in Parliament, destined to alter, not only the form of their government, but by example those of many other countries and to influence down to our day the relations to one another of many grades of society in Western Europe and in America.

The States General replaced the Notables on 1 May, 1789, and lasted until 30 September, 1790. A National Assembly followed, at first known as the Constituent and later as the Legislative Assembly, and lasted until 20 September, 1792, when came the Convention.

Despite violence and outrage, the States General and the National Assembly may be considered, in their intentions, constitutional, and this may be formally proved by the solemn acceptance of the Acte Constitutionelle presented to Louis XVI on September 13, 1791, and accepted by him on the 20th of that month, with the apparently sincere expressions of goodwill on the part of both the King and the representatives of the people.

In this new constitution, it might have been believed, as it was hoped, that the labour of these Assemblies in their deliberations during four years would have found a fruitful settlement for the government of France for many generations to come.

But it was not to be. It remained for the fourth last great Assembly of the Revolution, the National Convention, openly to adopt red revolution, and to bring the life of France to the peak of the Terror.

In this sketch of the Knights of Malta, the main stream of the national history of France cannot be followed in detail.

Some events of the Revolution will be described, with their effects and reactions, in relation to the lives and fortunes of the Knights of the Order; they will be given under various aspects, following the chronological order as far as possible.

CHAPTER I

NEWS FOR MALTA

News for Malta—De Bosredon's Balance Sheet gives a warning—The Assembly of Notables—Disturbing Pages—The States General—The Fall of the Bastille

NEWS of strange events in France reached Malta in many ways.

The frigates of the Order would bring, with their transport of contributions from the French Commanderies, reports gathered amongst their friends at Marseilles, Toulon, Antibes, or other ports in the South of France. French ships of war or of the mercantile marine continuously put in at Malta, and the captains and crews of these brought, to the quayside cafés of Valletta, their tales of the old régime and the hopes of the new. These doubtless lost nothing in the telling and were spread, in turn, amongst the Maltese people to the remotest 'casal'.

In the French Auberges, the novices, fresh from their country homes in Provence or Auvergne, would describe to their comrades, in the immature perspective of youthful minds, how the hunts had been stopped and the rents had not been paid by their fathers' tenants, 'who were now being demoralized by the poisonous ideas of a lot of low agitators'. At Versailles itself, so they had heard, just before they left France, an Archbishop and a Prince of the Blood were mixed up with these fellows!

The years 1787 and 1788 were, however, to pass without any great disturbance of public opinion in the Order in Malta, or any interruption of the usual routine. Distance gave a sense of security and prevented any real estimate of the growth of the vast political forces about to overthrow ancient institutions in France. Definite records, however, of the democratic forces manifesting themselves appeared in these years in the official reports from the French Priories and could not be disregarded by the Grand Master or the officials in the Convent.

De Bosredon's Balance Sheet gives a warning

The Secretary to the Treasury at Malta, for instance, the Chevalier de Bosredon de Ransijat of Auvergne, was fully alive to the situation, and made a remarkable allusion to the demand in France for the publication of a National Balance Sheet, in one of his own financial reports upon the resources of the Order presented to the Grand Master. This document, known as the 'Bilancio decennale del Comun Tesoro', printed in the year 1789, was the outcome of many ponderings by de Bosredon in the ten years in which he had now worked at the Treasury.

In an elaborate introduction to this Balance Sheet he points out, as already noted, that 'few Sovereigns have published a table of the exact situation of their finances', and in a veiled allusion to the position of France, he is 'apprehensive lest the famous discussions which arose in a recent year in a great State as to the current method of presenting the *Compte Général* may become common to most Nations and to Malta'. The Chevalier de Bosredon had clearly followed M. Calonne's career and feared himself to meet the French Minister's fate. Calonne, it will be remembered, had presented accounts to the Assembly of Notables at Versailles in 1787, and in a famous speech explained the impossibility of knowing precisely at the time how France stood financially. His explanations were not accepted by the Assembly and he ultimately fell. Necker then became indispensable.

This allusion of the Secretary is perhaps the first official reaction of the affairs of the Order to the principles of the French Revolution, and as such, though slight, is worthy of remark in this book.

The Assembly of Notables

The die-hards of the Order looked upon the Assembly of Notables with great disfavour. They spoke of it afterwards as 'so imprudently convened by Monsieur de Calonne', and as a thing which 'can be considered the cause of all the evils which afterwards befell France'.

At the moment of the convocation of these notables there was at Versailles the Bailli de Virieu, then Minister of the Court of Parma in France. He wrote apprehensively to the Secretary of the Grand Master at Malta concerning this Assembly as follows :

> ‘The deficit of the finances and the indispensable necessity of immediate remedies forced a recourse to this great means, as the only possible one, to preserve the Government of France and save it from bankruptcy, which otherwise would be inevitable: but how was it they did not see that, instead of merely summoning this consultative assembly to give the aid required, they were actually, on the contrary, putting it into a tutelary and authoritative position, by which it was empowered to examine into the causes of the deficit, and if it wished, demand an account from the Minister, which might result in grave prejudice to the King's authority?
>
> ‘In view of the spirit of liberty which for some time has spread in France, I can only regard the summoning of this assembly as an unpardonable fault on the part of the Minister who has dared to propose it, and who assuredly will be the first victim. Already I perceive in their heads a fermentation which, if it lasts, can only, in my opinion, become destructive of the privileged part of society and par contre-coup of our Order. May Heaven prevent this from happening!’

Disturbing Pages

A cloud of pamphlets, liberated by the removal of restrictions upon the Press in 1788 by Necker, was another intimation received by the Grand Master of the new orientation of men's minds and the reconstruction of society now being attempted in France. Necker had, indeed, removed the restrictions which required the King's approval for printing or publishing of any kind, in the hope that the people would be illuminated to the full upon the real interests of the State, and one saw France accordingly ‘inundated with pamphlets, nearly all advocating reforms, all disadvantageous to the clergy and the nobility’.

The industrious Receiver General of the Order, at Marseilles, the Bailli de Foresta, methodically forwarded to Malta many such brochures, broad-sheets, books, and documents which he considered to be of interest to the Grand Master and Council. The Abbé Siéyès was doubtless not unrepresented. Many fugitive pages of this sort (with many publications of later years) now rest, rarely read, just as they came, between the leaves in the numerous letter-books of the Order in the Archives at Valletta. The larger pamphlets and books have found their way to the Public Library.

The Grand Master de Rohan took due note of these publications, and as his Secretary tells us, 'read them sometimes himself and never ceased to express his astonishment that the French Government should allow the country to be flooded with writings which could do nothing but exasperate the minds of the people and irritate them against the two first orders of the State'. 'It is clearly just', he said, 'that the property of the Nobles and the Clergy should both be subjected to the same tax as is imposed on that of the Third Estate, and that most of the feudal rights require to be reformed: but why are not these things, instead of being brought into public discussion, reserved for the *conseil d'état*, where, having been decided in the presence of the *monarque législateur*, they could be sanctioned and little by little brought into operation? By this they might avoid the evils which can only result from an extreme *exaltation des têtes*, which is only bound to create dangers and troubles. Cannot the Ministers see this?'

The observations, too, of Doublet himself upon these publications are interesting.

'I read with attention the principal pamphlets which have, since 1788, flooded France, and I came to the conclusion that if this extreme effervescence of feeling ever found itself opposed in a way conflicting with the general opinion, the shock resulting would produce a bloody revolution, disastrous to those who should oppose it, whoever they might be. Accordingly I thought in 1789 that the attitude of the greater part of the nobles and of the clergy in the États Generaux against the members of the Tiers État would have most harmful results for these two classes of the Community. I even wrote this confidentially (11 June, 1789) to my old friend the Bailli de Virieu, then Minister of the Court of Parma at Paris. I had also the courage to express my opinion freely at Malta, but without undue feeling or fanaticism, and solely as one who feared for the fate both of the Royal Family and of the Order.'

The States General, 1 *May*, 1789

In the States General at Versailles the Order of Malta was to have its place. By a ruling of 24 January, 1789, the King directed that the Baillis and Commanders of the Order of Malta were to be included in the Ecclesiastical Order; the Novices without benefices in the Noblesse, and the servants-d'armes, who had no vows, in the Tiers État. It is interesting, therefore, to note that the Order of Malta was uniquely divided amongst the three Estates.[1]

The French Knights attached to the Order in France were accordingly made electors and were also eligible themselves for a seat in the Assembly. Three were, in fact, elected—the Bailli de Crussol, as deputy for the prévôté of Paris, the Chevalier d'Esclan, who represented the district of North Vesoul, and the Bailli Flachslanden for a district in Alsace. This last Knight was turcopilier of the whole Order with a seat in the Sacred Council at Malta, and is interesting to us as a member of the recently formed Anglo-Bavarian Langue.

The Grand Master de Rohan, remarks Doublet, saw with regret these Members of the Order amongst the Deputies. He thought that as members of a foreign and sovereign Order they were not eligible to sit and should have refused to go forward for election.

When, however, he learnt that in the Convocation of the States General the Tiers État would have equal voice with the clergy and nobility united, he said:

> 'This is an innovation which seems just, but there will be trouble in the country in using these votes unless the first two Estates have the wisdom to support the good faith and intention of the King for the reunion of the Three Chambers in one, which if generously adopted, would lead easily to the reform of many abuses, but if opposed, will lead to evil . . . and the people stirred up by writings and libels will be inclined to use violence against those they consider enemies of the public good.'

On learning, Doublet tells us, of the obstacles which the first two Orders (nobles and clergy) opposed to their union with the Tiers État in a single chamber, and that the desires of the King, expressed by his Commissioners and in his name for the success of this union, were without avail, 'the Grand Master, regarding this obstinacy as the presage of the greatest evil, ordered him to write to the Grand Cross de Virieu to use all his influence and that of his relations and friends, to hasten this union in order to prevent a schism which would become disastrous to France, and to the King and his august family, and of which those opposing the union would become the first victims'.

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[1] This 'arrêt' seems to have been drafted hurriedly. It does not seem to follow a logical division.

'In ordering this letter to be dispatched,' says Doublet, 'the Prince had without doubt forgotten that it would take at least a month for the letter to reach its destination, and that even if it were to arrive in time the requests, démarches, or the prayers of the Bailli or of his relations or friends would hardly fulfil their object; I permitted myself to say this to the Grand Master after I had sent off my letter. Your two remarks are just, he said to me, but at least your letter will prove to Virieu that in his position I would never remain like him and many others without taking action.'

The Fall of the Bastille

These meetings of the States General in the summer months were accompanied by political disorders and civil commotion of all kinds, both in Paris and in the country. A rumour spread that there was a plan of the Court party to remove by force the Assembly itself, using the troops who at that time surrounded Paris and Versailles. The people rose in Paris and captured the Bastille on the famous Fourteenth of July.

The Court opposition to a union of the Three Orders dissolved; a National Guard was created to keep the peace; the regular troops were withdrawn from Paris and Versailles. The States General, now transformed into a National Assembly, came together, on the first day of August, 1789, to conduct the government of the country in the name of a united France, and to make a new Constitution.

To the capital came the King in triumph, to be received on behalf of the people by the Archbishop, the Mayor of Paris, Lafayette, and the National Guards. Speeches were made and the tricolour was formally adopted. His Majesty placed the new colours of France in his hat and returned to Versailles with the colours decorating the harness of his horses and the bunch of ribbons, which he had received from Lafayette, displayed at his carriage window.

That evening the patriotic crowds who surged through the streets, enthusiastic in their newly won liberties, gazed at an illuminated 'transparency' displayed in front of the hôtel de Ville, a tribute to their good King, in the words: 'Louis XVI Père de la Patrie'.

CHAPTER II
CONFLICT WITH THE ORDER

Conflict with the Order—The New Constitution—Failure of the Reform—Le Don Patriotique—Paper Money and Confiscation

THE first conflict between the principles of the Revolution and the interests of the Order came on the famous night of August 4 and 5, 1789, when the National Assembly, as the States General were now called, passed with unanimity and in a delirium of joy an 'arrêt' which abolished feudal privileges in France.

On the 12th of the same month there was also passed a 'declaration of the rights of man and of the citizen', and as a corollary, a *serment civique* was imposed upon all functionaries of the State.

A letter dated 'à Paris le 17 Août 1789' described to de Rohan, in terms prophetic of the fate of his Order and of the interests of his class, the situation as it appeared to a Knight. It reached the Grand Master from the Bailli de Loras in Naples, to whom it appears to have been written. It is unsigned and seems to be in the handwriting of de Virieu:

> 'The Kingdom is in the most violent crisis and no one can foretell in what all the disorder will end. I would wish to believe that future generations will receive some fruits of the incredible revolution which has just taken place, but ours is suffering cruelly, the Order of Malta, the clergy and the nobility are all crushed, the suppression of our rights is leading us to the poor house . . . happily without appearing it I am a bit of a philosopher . . . and I shall know how to live on whatever they may leave us. . . .
>
> 'The 1,200 *kings* who compose the National Parliament alone have the right of being heard. I have been present at some of the meetings. It is pitiable to see the great interests of a nation " so cavalierly treated ". They only speak of the constitution, of the rights of man . . . some one wanted to say that they should have also spoken of his duties. They would not listen to him. It is truly pitiable.
>
> 'Good-bye, my dear Bailli,' the letter concludes, 'Pray

S. Jean to interest himself for us. Without a miracle of our Patron we are lost!'

A postscript then adds:

'The Commandery of your brother Jean has been sacked, but he has been able to get away.'

These decisions affected the Order of Malta vitally[1]. It seemed, in fact, to destroy at one stroke the seigneurial jurisdiction of the Order, not only in Paris, but throughout France, and the Bailli of the Temple, de Crussol, found himself suddenly confronted by disquieting and perplexing problems. For example, what would happen to tenants of the Temple or of the other Commanderies who would not pay their rents? Had the Bailli to follow them into the King's courts? Could he no longer cite them before him in his own court-house by the Great Gate of the Temple as of old at the hour of three o'clock on a Saturday afternoon, and if they did not appear, send one of his sergeants with a bâton to bring them bodily along? The gallows of the Order, indeed, placed of old in the Enclos, had not been in use since 1770, and had fallen to pieces, but had it now to be taken down for good?

The exclusive right of shooting and preserving game and keeping doves reserved to Commanders, was it to go? Already the young fellows on the land were blazing away with their guns, with little regard for private property, taking a shot at their seigneur's birds, even entering into his demesne! Besides, the whole nation would thus be allowed to carry arms!

More important, however, was the fact that the dimes were to be abolished, absolutely or, in some cases, with the right of redemption. Either way this would prove a costly business for the Order.

The revenue of local Commanderies came largely from dimes paid by the tenants whose families had been established for generations on the lands of the Order. These tenants were much better off than many others in France. The Order, indeed, prided itself that it was the best landlord in rural France. The visitations of the Priories, made with much solemnity and ceremonial by the distinguished strangers sent down by commission from the Grand Master himself, went into the most minute questions as to the rights and duties of the tenants, the payment of labourers and the housing of the dependents. The most reputable inhabitants were even examined secretly as to any causes of complaint against the Commanders or the 'fermier', to whom he had sold the rents. The numerous reports of the visitations, transmitted in duplicate to Malta, abundantly testified this. Very few of the Grand Seigneurs would have gone to such trouble on their estates, and now the dimes were going to be taken away!

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[1] By the 'arrêt' referred to there were abolished:
Inequality of serf;
Seigneurial jurisdictions;
Exclusive hunting rights, keeping of dove-cots and rabbit-warrens, &c.;
Sales of public offices;
Special privileges of towns and Provinces and provincial districts.
Pensions not based on public claims.
And there were decreed:
Equality of impôts;
Extinguishment of the dime;
Right of admission of all citizens into civil and military employment in the State;
Reform of the courts and the jury system.

* * *

The young Prince, Charles duc de Berry, aged eleven years, was now the titular head of the Temple and its dependencies, having been made Grand Prior in succession to his brother, the duc d'Angoulême, in June 1789. The Temple was administered in his name by the Chevalier de Crussol. The father of the Prince, the Comte d'Artois, was one of the first to flee the country, emigrating immediately after the fall of the Bastille in the July of this year, taking this child Prior with him. In a few years, the young Prince was to serve in the army of Condé with the powers leagued against France.

So, in the autumn of 1789, the Municipality of Paris ordered the seals to be placed upon all the possessions and papers of the Comte d'Artois, and this it would appear extended to the prioral palace in the Temple, where he had occasionally resided in virtue of his son's position—though the rest of the buildings in the Enclos were, for the time being, left alone.

The Chevalier de Crussol therefore found himself in charge of the Temple in the name of a Grand Prior who had joined the enemies of his country! This Knight had been returned for the 'prévôté' of Paris, representing the noblesse in the National Assembly, where he vigorously opposed the principles of the Revolution. Mindful, however, of the injunctions of his Grand Master, he was willing, though a noble, to sit and vote with the Tiers État. In connection with his attendance at the session of the famous days of 4 and 5 August, in the Tennis

Court, a curious incident arose which finds its way to the minutes of the Assembly.

The report of the Moniteur reads:

'At the opening of the Séance, M. Chapellier the President asked that M. le Bailli de Crussol be heard. This deputy stated that in coming from the Château[1] (of Versailles) his carriage had been stopped on the Place d'Armes (outside the gates of the château) by the Guards of the town, that grooms of the Comte d'Artois had presented blunderbusses at him within and that asking his coachman why, he had received no satisfactory reply. He concluded by demanding that his declaration be recorded and prayed the Assembly to accept his excuses for having recounted an incident of perhaps little importance for them, but one which was very much on his mind.

'It was decided to enter this declaration upon the *procès-verbal*.'

A certain mystery typical of those troubled times hangs over this attack upon the Bailli. It is curious to note the presence of the servants of the emigré Comte d'Artois acting in concert with the Town Guards. Their motives do not transpire. Were they the agents provocateurs of the extreme Court party, at this time charged with fomenting disorders against the nobility, to bring about a counter-revolution? Did they think de Crussol had betrayed the Grand Prior?

The personal memoirs or correspondence of the times must be searched for a satisfactory reply.

The New Constitution

The Assembly, having abolished privileges and declared rights, had, with Mirabeau as principal Minister, to undertake the task of the government of the country in the new conditions. National defence, the administration of justice, the raising of revenue—these were the normal functions of a government. But a whole new constitution had, however, to be framed to hold together the new political principles. The drafting of this was entrusted to a committee of its members. It was not completed until September 1791, when it was presented and adopted; and thus for two years the friends of the King, and, not least of these, the Knights of Malta, were kept in anxious suspense as to the future of the Crown and all it meant to them.

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[1] The contemporary list of the members shows that the Bailli, A. C. E. Crussol d'Uzès, resided at 'Versailles au Château, Galerie des Princes, 95, and rue de la Pepinière, Paris'.

In the meantime the Assembly had to meet the many unforeseen demands made on them by the developing revolution. Their policy was directed through a number of committees of their members, who in turn controlled the particular Minister. Fresh legislation was ever necessary, and various new laws, prepared by these democratic committees, undermined the position of many ancient organizations, including the Order of Malta, and something must therefore be told of the steps taken by the Assembly in their task of national reconstruction.

The duty lay upon Necker, as now first Minister of the Finances, to find the ways and means. Large sums would henceforth be necessary; for new ministries and committees with their staffs and voluminous printing; for the new National Guard of 48,000 men; for the establishment and housing of the National Assembly itself—all to be permanent organizations in the State in addition to most of the offices and departments of the old régime.

The poverty of the people, from causes known to the reader, also called for the provision by the State of an immediate and adequate supply of food and exceptional relief works. The country, indeed, in the coming winter, was to suffer another famine. As was natural in such vast undertakings much expenditure not estimated had to be provided for. But the Treasury was empty and the nation was living on credit. The cost of government in the current year would far exceed the revenue.

Failure of the Reform

Necker had, as once before, to stop the deficit, as the phrase of the day put it. The immediate methods available were the usual taxes and a public loan. A loan for 30,000,000 livres was accordingly issued to the public. Necker's plan included retrenchments where possible. But the times were not favourable for financial operations. Disorder and commotion were appearing in every part of the country. There was the threat of foreign invasion. This retarded industry and commerce. The revenues from the ordinary taxes fell in a proportionate amount. In some cases the taxes themselves could not be collected. Necker was forced to go to the Assembly, to blame them bitterly for not controlling the situation and to ask for the restoration of law and order. An appeal was therefore issued by the Assembly to the patriotism of the people to hold fast, and to allow the loan to succeed, but without avail.

A letter from a Knight in Paris gives a picture of the unhappy Minister in this month of August.

'Such is the frightful extremity in which they find themselves in the capital that M. Neker (*sic*), whose public loan has produced nothing, seeing no other means of resource, is visibly being destroyed by ill-health, by work, and by grief.

'The Province of Dauphiny is showing itself dissatisfied with the States General, a similar agitation is found in Burgundy and in Franche Comté, where there is already formed a defensive confederation, on all sides the people are armed, the brigands fill the countryside and the main roads without which they could not make themselves masters. In some provinces they wish to destroy the parliaments and all connected with them, in others as in Burgundy they are inclined to call the provincial states together according to their ancient forms for the purpose of revoking the powers of the Deputies in the States General; always, however, they persecute the nobility.' A personal note concludes the letter. 'The brave and unfortunate M. d'Albert de Rionnes has just been assassinated.'

'The operations of the States General,' this Knight somewhat cynically remarks, 'are becoming unpopular, because in the paper of M. de Mirabeau it is proposed to abolish procureurs, avocats, notaries, etc. . . .

'The National Guard of Paris is composed of deserters, while one hundred thousand valets are walking the streets unemployed. It is the same in the case of all other workers now unemployed.

'The bakers refuse even to supply the Ministers because they accuse them of being party to the pillage of their shops.

'As for gentlemen, if they are obliged to walk on the streets, like the valets, for work, they must sew up their pockets, for fear that incriminating documents be thrust therein, that they may be arrested and led to death. . . .

'The States General, frightened at the universal unrest, are dwindling away and are reduced to 500 at most; what remains of this Assembly want to ask the King himself to fix the terms of the new loan, to revive confidence . . . but it is in vain, because the capitalists have fled and the rich too, so that there only remain in France the lower classes in arms but without bread.'

A second loan for 80,000,000 livres was soon needed and asked for, but this likewise was to fail.

Le Don Patriotique

With the failure of his loans, Necker had to look for a further plan. The interior troubles, indeed, had destroyed credit. Emigration was removing capital. Necker's plan, as Thiers puts it, was 'only a hope', but his hope was in the patriotism of the nation, and at this juncture it was justified.

The worried Minister went on September 25 to the National Assembly and told them that every conceivable retrenchment in expenditure had been made—on the pensions, the Royal Household, the stud farm, the War Department, and in all the other departments of the State.

He then submitted and carried, in one of his greatest oratorical efforts, the proposal of a *Don Patriotique*, by which the State asked of each good citizen one quarter of his income. Mirabeau launched a patriotic appeal to the people to support it.

The project had some elements of nobility in it. It would be left entirely to the honour of the individual citizen to declare, upon an official form, the amount of his own income or the amount he was willing and able to contribute to the nation in this great emergency.

No inquisition or inquiry would be made by any agent of the Government. The contributions of Paris would be received on behalf of the Government by the Baron de Virieu, Deputy in the Assembly for Paris.[1] Local treasurers were appointed for other districts.

A patriotic response was immediately made to this new demand, beyond all expectations and from unsuspected quarters.

The King and Queen write from Versailles to the President of the Assembly that they are sending their gold and silver to the Mint; the Foreign Minister, M. de Vergennes, announces that he is contributing a quarter of his income, and the venerable Archbishop of Paris mounts the tribune and tells the Assembly that he is placing at the disposal of the nation the gold, silver, and other ornaments in the Treasury of Notre Dame, keeping only the minimum necessary for the needs of the Divine Service, and that he will recommend his clergy to do likewise in their parochial churches.

All sorts and conditions of citizens, Frenchmen from afar, and even foreign residents in France, followed these exalted examples. Sincere love of country, a hatred of the threatened interference of foreign Powers, pathetic sacrifice, vanity, fanaticism, fear—all varieties of human feeling were evidenced in the letters or declarations which accompanied the gifts. Money, land, furniture, objects of art, or trivial trinkets, the small possessions of the poor—everything was offered: men and equally women desired 'to lay their offerings on the altar of their country', 'in defence of the common cause', or 'to pay for the National Guards who will march to the frontiers against the enemies of the State.'

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[1] Presumably a kinsman of the Bailli de Virieu of the Order of Malta.

The President of the Assembly, or the local officials, publicly acknowledged these gifts, and were kept very busy in the autumn months doing so. Sometimes, indeed, they were not duly acknowledged, as was natural in such a vast undertaking, and the letters complaining about these errors, in which anger is mixed with understanding, make interesting reading.

The Grand Priory of France was one of the first proprietors to come forward with their contribution, and the Receiver of the Temple presented to the Minister an account of their revenues. This official was able, accordingly, to report, in a letter to Malta of August 1790, 'that the Grand Priory of France had placed to the credit of the nation 400,000 livres out of the surplus in hand at the end of the financial year'. The Knights in the other Grand Priories of France had likewise collectively contributed. Many had individually given large donations.

In Malta itself the French 'Don Patriotique' created no little stir. Bosredon de Ransijat, the Secretary to the Treasury there, fresh from his studies of Necker, adopted the proposal with enthusiasm. In a personal letter to the Grand Master de Rohan, he made a remarkable suggestion. It is nothing less than that the Order should present to the French Assembly, in their need, all the gold and silver plate, a unique collection, of the Treasury and of the Prioral Church of S. John at Valletta, completely ignoring that these ornaments belonged to the eight Langues as a whole, not only to the French Knights, and that such a gift would be a derogation of the sovereignty of the Island.

De Bosredon de Ransijat stood in high esteem in Malta. His balance sheet had been printed and distributed through all the Priories of the Order in Europe, and it was seen that he had placed the finances of the government of the Order on a clearer if not a more effective footing. But his proposal in relation to the 'Don Patriotique' brought upon his head many angry denunciations, so much so that for a time he could not leave his house in Malta without being insulted by many Maltese as well as by the Knights themselves. His advanced views in relation to politics in France were leading him into open approval of democratic movements, and in this way he incurred the increasing dislike of the older and more reactionary members of the Venerable Chamber and of the Sacred Council itself. Such was his character, however, that this opposition only made him more obstinate in his view. He called all who did not agree with him 'aristocrats', and they called him 'democrat', 'Jacobin', and 'Sans-culotte'. His letter to the Grand Master, above-mentioned, indeed, revealed a larger vision than his opponents imagined. He urged the diplomatic value of aiding the democratic forces in France in their time of need, with an eye to the interests of the Order in the future. His suggestion, however, concerning the treasures at Malta, was so unpopular and inordinate that it had to be abandoned.

But, in spite of his unpopularity, Bosredon de Ransijat, by his patient persistence and assiduity in his work at the Treasury, was able to hold both his office and the goodwill of the Grand Master, himself a Frenchman, for eight more years.

Paper Money and Confiscation

The 'Dons Patriotiques', so enthusiastically responded to, were not sufficient in themselves to restore peace and progress to France. For this, as Necker knew, the masses of the people would have to settle down to hard work, on the land and at their industries, with a knowledge and a skill which they hardly possessed. The goodwill, the directing intelligence, and the aid of the capital of those above them would be required. A national life, running thus for several years in a single line of virtuous economic production, of personal retrenchments and of individual endeavour, might have produced a self-supporting, contented people. They might have worked the new Constitution, now in the making, and year by year reduced the devastating deficit.

But human affairs do not run so simply in a single line to a sole end.

Countless factors prevented the economic recovery of France and dissipated national energies in other directions. The character of individual citizens; the feeling of class-interests; the allurement, so irresistible to many, of participation in politics; the disbelief of some in the good faith of their fellow-men, and in any form of stability in public institutions; and the ideals of others, making them disregard the plain pedestrian things of life and place their hopes on things unattainable such as the restoration of the old régime, or the advent of a Utopia—these were a few of the factors.

Fear, hatred, greed, in some form or other prompted the minds of the citizens in the new régime. The unbending aristocrats looked for aid from foreign Powers to restore the old régime in its entirety, and would give no help to the Assembly. At the other extreme were found the free-thinkers who in the Assembly, or in their districts, were seeking an opportunity to overthrow and uproot the Catholic Church—the only institution in the land which, had it been allowed to function, might have brought a saving stability to the desperate situation. For despite its official annihilation, the majority of the people of France adhered to it in their hearts, and many were to die for it.

In this national cauldron of conflicting desires, Necker and his colleagues on the committee of finance had still to find further revenue.

Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun, had already on the 10th October, at Versailles, proposed that the Assembly should take possession of the lands of the Church, but no action was taken.

On October the 19th, 1789, the Assembly moved from Versailles to Paris, and on 3rd November it passed a resolution by which 'the property of the clergy' was declared 'at the disposition of the nation'.

An Ecclesiastical Commission was at the same time formed to deal with the Church in its new relation to the State.

These moves and their consequences caused consternation in the Order of Malta. They were a religious body independent of the State, but some of the most distinguished prelates and many priests in France wore their cross. They could not be indifferent to their fate.

The Bailli de Loras from Rome, where he had doubtless discussed the matter with the Pope and the Cardinals, wrote to the Grand Master suggesting that it should be made clear that the clergy of the Order were different and distinct from the clergy of France.

The Receiver General, the chevalier D'Estourmel from Paris, reported that there was a movement amongst the Knights, notably in Toulouse, to get a Chapter General summoned at once to deal with the situation, and that the Abbé Boyer was setting out to Rome to get the Pope to issue by *motu proprio* the necessary brief.

But in the Assembly, finance was the pressing problem. Money for the government and for the relief of the people had to be found.

It was determined, therefore, by the Assembly to issue as required paper money to the amount of 400,000,000 livres, *assignats* as they were called, raised later to 1,800,000,000 livres, and at the same time to take sufficient of the property of the Church—the lands, the buildings and their valuable contents—to realise by sales to the public an equivalent amount of money. The money, in hard cash, placed in the Treasury, would guarantee this paper issue. The rich lands of the Order of Malta in France would prove a valuable asset in this scheme.

We read, in the session of November 13, 1789, of the next step in the confiscation of Church property. It was then proposed, the Deputy Treilhard presiding, that the seals of the State be imposed upon all the movable property—the books and furniture and plate of the religious houses, and especially upon their title deeds and documents. This was done to prevent any removal by their owners, in anticipation of State action.

It was not clear, however, that the Grand Priories and Commanderies of the Order were to be included in this decree. M. de Montesquieu accordingly proposed that the Order of Malta be exempt from this imposition—and that the Assembly reserve its rights to legislate later upon this Order. For the moment, the imposition of seals, so dearly loved of French administrators, was abandoned and the mere surveillance of the Municipality ordered.

Early in the Spring of 1790, it was decided to proceed with the sale of Church property all over France. This transaction was not so easy as it at first looked. The vast undertaking required an enormous organization of special commissioners, architects, archivists, antiquarians, valuers, and clerks, who were installed in a central office in Paris. Local offices for the cities, towns, and country districts had also to be opened. An effective procedure had to be followed. The particular properties had to be selected and valued, their sales could not be launched all at once, lest the market should become glutted. The property must reach the public on terms which would allow easy payments, and in small lots. Good title must be given, and, pending the transfer, money, badly needed, must be received on account by the State.

The scruples of conscience, too, of those citizens who might not wish personally to take property, as if by force, from a religious house at their doors, or from the church or chapel where for so many years they had prayed, but who desired and were willing to pay for the commodious cloisters or the well-built farm, for secular purposes of commerce or enjoyment, must be soothed. This was to be secured by the State's first acquiring the property, and then vesting it in the local authorities, who were to dispose of it in turn to possible purchasers.

Thus on the 17th March, it was possible to make the first allotment of Church property to the local authorities, urban and rural, to be put up for sale by them to the public.

The enormous economic and social upheaval resulting from the principles of this policy and its application had hardly been foreseen by Necker. It added to the difficulties of any national reconstruction. The enemies of the Church had, indeed, worked well, but they had compromised the State.

CHAPTER III

THE NEW AMBASSADOR

The Marquis de La Brillane—Action of the Ambassador—Letter of the Grand Master—Fate of the Ambassador

IN view of the tendencies of the times, it was obvious that the heads of the Order in Paris must take all and every step to ward off the coming dangers, and their efforts were so strenuous and successful, that it was not until the fall of the Monarchy and the establishment of a purely Republican Government, in the National Convention of September 1792, that their vast estates in France were confiscated. For three years the Order of Malta held out, and if some of the principal Knights had not gone over so conspicuously to the Royalist cause and the restoration of the old régime, the Order might possibly have weathered the storm.

Unfortunately by the year 1789 the Ambassador of the Order, the Bailli de Suffren, had died, and the Knights lost an able and brilliant defender in the conflict. His place was filled by the notable figure of the Bailli de La Brillane.

The Marquis de La Brillane was a Knight of Auvergne in whose career Marie Antoinette had taken an interest. Thirteen years previously, when he had set out to attend the famous Chapter General at Malta, de La Brillane carried with him a personal letter from the Queen 'to her cousin the Grand Master' in which she expressed the desire that the marquis might replace the Baron de Breteuil at Rome when the latter should leave the Embassy there. She gave the letter 'as a mark of her regard, both because of his birth and because of his services to and zeal for the Religion'. De Rohan was, on this occasion, willing 'to do the things which were agreeable to her'—as she naïvely puts it in one of her letters—and so the Marquis de La Brillane was in due course promoted to Rome.

His transference to Versailles as Ambassador, no doubt, likewise pleased the Queen and put the Order in favour at the French Court, at least amongst the party which she dominated. Thus did the Grand Master follow his own precept in a letter to his friend, de Suffren, in which he wrote: 'We must ever look upon Versailles as our "étoile polaire".'

Two persons, in different spheres, looked, however, with great anxiety upon the appointment of de La Brillane and feared for the interests of the Order. One critic was the Bailli de Loras, who had known him in Rome, and wrote to de Rohan of ‘ our inept Ambassador ’ and besought that he might be appointed in his place as a special Minister Plenipotentiary, independent even of the Sacred Council, to negotiate a concordat with the National Assembly. The other critic was the clerk in the Embassy, Cibon, who took the extraordinary step of writing, in March 1789, a personal letter marked ‘ très secrète ’ to the Grand Master in which he, subordinate employee and mere layman though he was, ‘ ventures to expose some reflections upon M. le Bailli de La Brillane ’.

Cibon explained that on that very day, March 26, 1789, the Ambassador had gone off to Versailles to have his first audience of the King, leaving him behind in Paris ‘ as his health did not permit him to accompany him ’. The writer stated that he knew exactly what income the Marquis really had, and how great were his expenses. He was not a little surprised at the special activities with which the Ambassador opened his Ministerial career. He had put all his servants in gorgeous livery and in his hôtel meublé he had not only given dinners to his confrères, but also to many lords and ladies of the Court, notably those who were in favour with the King and the Queen, with whom he was on very intimate terms. He declared that the Queen had openly honoured, flattered, and obliged de La Brillane.

These expenses required support. It was said that the Grand Priory of France was about to be transferred from the son of the Comte d’Artois to the son of M. le Prince de Guéméné, which rumour was creating a certain sensation in Paris! Could this Grand Priory with its rich revenues be given to the new Ambassador? Cibon declared that he had felt it his duty to acquaint the Grand Master of the exact state of affairs and leave ‘ to the light and wisdom of His Eminent Highness the finding of a way to conciliate all ’.

The Grand Master may have been able to read between the lines of this letter something more than the mere financial embarrassments of the Ambassador of a great Order—the development of a Court intrigue against de La Brillane personally, or of a political plot against the Order. The letter, anyway, was docketed by Doublet and duly bound up with other private letters to de Rohan.

Action of the Ambassador

On the passing of the famous decrees of 2, 3 and 4 November 1789, suppressing the dimes and other feudal rights in France, the new Ambassador raised at once with the Executive Government the question of the rights of his Order.

As was the custom, in view of the distance in those days of an envoy from his Prince, the Ambassador was entrusted with several 'blancs-seigns'—sheets of paper signed and sealed by the Grand Master—to be used in his judgement as the emergency of an unforeseen situation might demand.

The threatened loss to the Order of their dimes and seigneurial rights obviously called for immediate action. Taking one of his 'blancs-seigns' de La Brillane wrote over the signature of the Grand Master a letter to the King calling for the revocation of the recent decrees or their modification in respect of the French possessions of the Order. This letter was handed by the King to the Comte de Montmorin, who in due course communicated it to the President of the National Assembly. Thus commenced the many discussions upon the affairs of the Order which were to ensue in the Assembly and in the Convention.

Letter of the Grand Master

'The loss of the dimes,' the letter stated, 'deals a deadly blow to the Order, who draw the greatest part of their revenues from the Kingdom of France. The Grand Master feels it his duty to himself, to the Order, and to the nations who compose it to protest.'

The action of the Assembly had been taken without a hearing. If they had considered the case justly they could not possibly have confused the Order with the clergy of France, whom they in no way resembled. This would have been quite apparent if the Assembly had shown the slightest desire to go deeply into the question.

The services of the Order to France in the past and to French navigation at the time were recalled.

An opportunity was asked for the Ambassador, who presented this letter, to explain more fully the situation. If this revenue was lost the useful services to France might not be continued. The Order might not even be able to maintain themselves in their Island of Malta, which, by its position and the prodigious expenditure of funds upon it, could be considered 'a frontier of France'. It was an assured asylum to all seafarers.

The advantages thus to be lost would be greater than any resulting to France from the property which the Assembly was now proposing to take away from the Order.

'Would the King interpose his powers and stop the application of the recent decree in respect to the Order?'

Such were the terms of the Ambassador's letter, and in many ways it was a tactless production.

The invocation of the King's veto by an outside power was a feature which was bound to rouse popular resentment in France, for the people were already beginning to speak with anger of 'Monsieur et Madame Veto'. The 'cahiers de doléances' already examined by a special committee of the States General, at great length, had told the legislators all they wanted to know about the Order. It was already represented in the Assembly. By disassociating the Order so formally from their clergy, the Ambassador doubtless alienated the sympathy of many orthodox French Catholics.

Fate of the Ambassador

The patriots were now beginning to believe in the existence of an 'inner cabinet' amongst the Queen's friends—the alleged 'Austrian Committee'—meeting secretly in the château of the Tuileries and designed to defeat the triumphant march of democracy. The Marquis de La Brillane was obviously a conservative of the old school, and as an intimate friend of Marie Antoinette, he was becoming suspect by the people. His invocation of the intervention of the King in the affairs of the Order, above the heads of the National Assembly, brought his position to a dangerous point.

When, a few days after writing his letter, the Ambassador presented himself to M. de Montmorin to discuss its reception, he was told by the Minister that his life was in danger.

'I am under no apprehension,' he immediately answered, 'for the moment has arrived when a man of honour, who faithfully performs his duty, may die as gloriously on a gallows as on the field of battle!'

Did the Ambassador feel in uttering these words that he was about to give his life in the service of his Order? A tragedy was imminent. Overcome with the strain of the negotiations and with anxiety for the future, the Ambassador, as he left the Ministry, was seized with a stroke and expired.

At Malta, the letter of de La Brillane was considered by the French Secretary Doublet as imprudent. It touched, he wrote, the sovereign rights of France, and it was not in accordance with the most formal instructions of the Grand Master in a letter of the preceding June to the six Grand Priories that they should not interfere in the internal affairs of the Kingdom. It was, however, difficult to see, in this case, where French affairs ended and those of Malta began.

On November 30, at the opening of the session, and when its real author was dead, the letter of the Grand Master to the King which we have described came before the Assembly, being read by one of the secretaries. M. de Boisgelin, Archevêque d'Aix, presided. A terse comment upon this communication, as reported in the *Moniteur*, came from an implacable enemy of the Order, the Deputy Camus: 'To furnish a reply to this letter,' he said, 'I demand that all the establishments of the Order of Malta in France be suppressed.'

No debate at this stage was held upon this letter, nor does it appear again in the pages of the *Moniteur*. The House then proceeded to the order of the day. This happened to be a *projet de décret* submitted by a M. Target on behalf of the Committee of the Constitution. By it new municipalities, with defined duties, were established all over France. These municipalities, as the reader knows, were to play a great part in the Revolution. This *projet de décret* was adopted at once—as were many enactments just as sweeping.

Camus, whose solitary remark we have quoted, was to play as insistent a part against the Knights as he had effectively played against the Church. He was once, it is said, a candidate for admission to the Order and had been rejected in terms of unnecessary humiliation. He had, naturally, little love now for it, and his jansenistic principles made him hate much of its material magnificence. In politics he was an advanced radical, and was already a powerful member of the Ecclesiastical Committee appointed to dispose of the property of the Church and form a new State Church.

CHAPTER IV

A STRICTLY NEUTRAL COURSE

To help 'la Mère Commune'—A Strictly Neutral Course—Discussion in the Assembly—Public Opinion

WHO was to fill de La Brillane's place?

The Sacred Council at Malta had already appointed from their members a special congregation of State to watch affairs in France. This body found it difficult to nominate a person suitable for the position of Ambassador in Paris. The Grand Master, therefore, designated the Bailli de Virieu as chargé d'affaires of the Order, recommending him to act in concert with the Receiver General, the Chevalier d'Estourmel, in Paris. This Bailli still represented the Duc de Parme at Versailles.

A new campaign in favour of the Order was started on many fronts by these intrepid Knights.

They found a remarkable ally in the Receiver of the Order at Marseilles, the Chevalier de Foresta, who stayed at his post until arrested and deported in 1793. With the officials at Paris, this Knight conducted a publicity campaign—as we should call it to-day—to impress upon the people of France the utility and the benevolence of the Order, designed to react upon opinion in the Assembly. The energy and devotion of these three principals, in a desperate cause, were amazing. The letters they wrote, the documents they drew up, the journeys and hazards they undertook were infinite. In their activities they received the devotion of a host of subordinates, at present, with the exceptions of the Abbé Ricard and the clerk Cibon, nameless and forgotten.

A Strictly Neutral Course

No detail was too small to receive attention, if it could favour the cause of 'la Mère Commune', as the Order was affectionately called by the Knights.

In the 'Almanach Royal' for 1789—the Court guide of the ancien régime—the name and address of the Ambassador of the Order had duly appeared with those of other foreign representatives. The entry read:

> 'M. le Bailli de Suffren, Ambassadeur *de la Religion de Malte*, Chaussée d'Antin au coin du Boulevart.'

In the years to follow, the Bailli de Virieu (for both de Suffren and de La Brillane were now dead) was very careful to alter the title of the Order and describe himself, wherever he could, as

> 'Chargé d'Affaires de *l'Ordre* SOUVERAIN ET NEUTRE de Malte'

to emphasize its detachment from the affairs of France.

The Court guide, it may be noted, was also to alter its name and appeared, from 1793, as the 'ALMANACH NATIONAL'!

These Knights might have much preferred to join the allied armies of the Kings now massing on the frontiers against France, but they substitute the sword for the pen. Pamphlets and brochures, written by themselves and the friends of the Order, appeared in profusion, pointing out reasons for the exemption of the Commanderies from confiscation. The changes were rung upon arguments of the sovereignty, neutrality, and internationality of the Order; and the fidelity of the Knights to their ancient motto, 'pro utilitate hominum'. The services rendered to France by their establishments at home and abroad, even in the distant West Indies, were recalled.

Against these publications appeared other pamphlets. One bears the dramatic title 'Malta Unmasked', by a soldier who had served two years in a regiment of the Grand Master. Another serious criticism bore the humorous title '*Les Chevaliers de Malte par un membre de l'ancien ordre du Tiers État*'.

Physical dangers now closed in upon the Knights in Paris.

'For safety's sake,' writes the Abbé Ricard to Messeigneurs in sending his monthly 'bilan' for May, 'the Chevalier d'Estourmel has withdrawn his Agency into my own quarters in the Temple, for the critical and stormy circumstances of the times demand much care and caution and prudence in our demarches.' 'I was appointed,' he adds with a little personal touch, 'in 1788, to the entire control of this Agency with the assistance of the Commander d'Aufrèry'—hoping, no doubt, his adherence to duty will in happier days be remembered to him.

It was safer for the moment in the Temple. It will be seen how all the movements in the Chevalier d'Estourmel's street were being watched. For the Receiver General lived not 400 paces from the Marquis Bertrand de Moleville and was his great friend. De Moleville was a Minister of the King, and was known later as the 'enfant terrible of royalism'. He was a most marked counter-revolutionary! . . .

So within the Temple the great case for the Order had to be prepared, and the abortive effort of de La Brillane's letter supplemented by a more comprehensive and detailed statement. In June the Chevalier d'Estourmel was busy with the Abbé Ricard drawing up an exact 'tableau' of the feudal rights, rents, revenues, and dignities, 'rachetable' and 'non-rachetable', of the Grand Priory of France and of Champagne, with a view to obtaining from the Assembly compensation for their losses through the abolition of the dimes.

A questionnaire is issued to the six Grand Priories of France who separately assemble to consider concerted action.

These Grand Priories now get into touch with one another, endless memoirs are drawn up and exchanged and representations reach the Government at Malta, asking for instructions or for information in the interests of 'la mère commune', as the Order is designated in the official correspondence.

Thus was attempted a constitutional course, with the approbation of the Grand Master and the authorities in Malta. The complications of the Revolution, as the fatal years 1790, 1791, and 1792 developed, unfortunately divided the French nation into three irreconcilable camps. The French Knights as a body were likewise divided disastrously—some few going over to republicanism; a number remaining moderate, but ineffective, Feuillants, ready to stand by the Constitution, the King, the nation, and the law; the majority, however, in the end emigrating as counter-revolutionaries or remaining hidden in France as Royalists.

It is not, therefore, possible to present simultaneously to the reader the various aspects that the story of the Order now assumes, any more than that would be possible with the larger story of the Revolution itself.

Discussion in the Assembly

Much 'lobbying' was done by the Knights amongst the Deputies well disposed to them in the Assembly, with a view to exempting the Grand Priories and Commanderies of the Order from the penal legislation, then in the making, against the Church and ancient institutions.

In the National Assembly a fatal discussion is at length reached on Thursday, July 29, 1790. In the *Journal Universel*, No. 250, we read: 'One of the secretaries read a "mémoire" by Monsieur le Bailli de Virieu, who had charge of the affairs of the Order of Malta, which says: "It would be the greatest injustice to despoil the Order, the more so at the moment when its ships are to be found on the Portuguese and Spanish coasts, where its galleys cruise about to ensure the liberty of men and trade against barbaric powers.

'"It is hoped that the National Assembly, in interpreting its decrees of the third of this month, will order that the proceeds from the redemption of their feudal rights will be placed in the coffers of the Order, to be profitably used for the purchase of other estates, and not in the coffers of the Nation."'

In this debate Camus returned to the attack. 'We have always been held up in our operations,' says Monsieur Camus, Jansenist, 'by difficulties made for us by the different military Orders established in France; we have even feared to handle those made by that of Malta. The time has come when we must decide if the Orders of the Holy Ghost, of S. Louis, of S. Lazare, of Mount Carmel, and of Malta are to continue. I ask that the "mémoire" of M. le Bailli de Virieu be sent back to the Committee of the Constitution, where two members of the Ecclesiastical Committee, two of the Military Committee and two of the Committee of Pensions will meet to submit an immediate report to us, and to present a draft decree on this subject.' This proposal was adopted.

The Chevalier d'Estourmel was undaunted by the threat. 'There is hope,' he writes to Malta, 'because the general troubles of this Kingdom delay the consideration of our case.' He had not yet learnt the personnel of the Committee of the Constitution, renewed recently, but he mentioned the names of the Abbé Breton and Treilhard with others spoken of as 'being well disposed to the Order'. Pending a decision, he had taken the matter to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs where, he tells us, 'M. le Garde des Sceaux has graciously received the last memorial from M. de Montmorin, the Foreign Minister', who was also, he declares, 'filled with good intentions to the Order'. It is hoped, therefore, to raise the matter at once before the Ecclesiastical Committee of the Assembly and press for an immediate decision 'as Monsieur Camus himself had demanded in his resolution'. An unexpected obstacle prevented this being done. Owing to the constitutional changes of a new election, the regularization of the papers of the Ambassadors who were kindly taking up the matter, had not yet been completed, and no further move could be made until they were received by the new Foreign Minister, whoever he might be. D'Estourmel, a confirmed optimist, was not disappointed at this, and declared, in his next letter to the Grand Master, 'the delay is all for the best because the repeated presentation of notes, by a continual allusion to the subject, will indicate to the National Assembly the importance of the question upon which they will have to decide, and will prove to them from day to day *that they can in no way change the existence of our Order nor take away its possessions in France without disregarding the rights of nations or the allies of the Order'*.

The problem of the property of the Order was not in fact disposed of until 'la loi spoliateur' of September 19, 1792, but long before this final decision, the members of the Order and its interests generally were violently affected by other decisions of the National Assembly.

Public Opinion

The *Journal Universel* from which we have quoted gives some items which show the spirit and direction in which public opinion was now moving in France in this July 1790.

'All Europe,' it tells its readers, 'is conspiring against France. We are surrounded at this moment by English, Spaniards, Savoyards, Austrians, Germans, and Prussians ready to fall on this Kingdom.

'If the foreign enemies, summoned by the princes, by the "grands du cour", by the Ministers, by the Royal Family, by the ci-devant nobles, by the priests, in a word by all the enemies of the country, enter France to overthrow the Constitution and re-establish the despotism of the King, who is the Frenchman, who is the free man who will not wish to fall in vengeance on all these atrocious criminals? . . . Frenchmen, who have sworn to maintain the Constitution or your regained liberty, arm yourselves, for the foreign enemy is on French soil! If your leaders are culpable, woe to them! Watch their conduct more than ever. See that the first French blood which flows will roll back in great waves on them!'

The last page gives, as a *variété*, news of the arrest of an aristocrat, in this case a M. de Bonne Savardin, who escaped from the prisons of the Abbaye, and was captured at Chalons-sur-Marne disguised as a domestic, and that of another, a M. Riolle, fleeing to the Court of Turin, with, it was said, incriminating papers against his country.

Such violent appeals appeared suitably in this paper, of which the full title read *Journal Universel ou Révolutions des Royaumes* and of which the editor was modestly described on the cover as a certain ‘ Audouin du Bataillon des Carmes ’. What part, one wonders, did he play with his company in the days of September ’92 ?

CHAPTER V

THE ATTACK ON THE CHURCH

Sale of Church Property, 17 *March,* 1790—*The Civic Oath*—
‘*The Sorrow of a Schism*’—*Troubles at Toulouse*—
‘*Gentlemen of the Municipality*’

THE sale of Church property—buildings, lands and endowments—was commenced all over France on 17 March, 1790, upon the plan already described. The valuable contents of churches, monasteries and convents, books, pictures, plate and furniture, were included in the sale. The spoliation had begun.

It is not possible here to enter into the various motives which prompted many persons to support this action. Broadly speaking, as we have explained, the Assembly had hoped to increase the credit of the nation, in relation to Necker's loans and the issue of ‘assignats’, by having at call the vast endowments of the Church, which were estimated to amount to one-fifth of the land of France.

The Ecclesiastical Committee, however, served as a stepping stone to a civil constitution for the clergy, so desired by the radicals. As the priests and religious became dispossessed of their revenues they would be forced to receive State aid, and as such to become servants of the State. An oath of fidelity to the State could then be imposed upon them, as upon all other civil servants, in accordance with the famous declaration of the Assembly in their session at Versailles.

It was an easy transition for the Assembly to claim the right to appoint the Bishops; to control the persons of the ministers of the Church, their teachings and tenets; and to declare the priests and religious who refused to take on conscientious grounds the *serment civique* to be enemies of the people. Proposals, on these lines and piecemeal, reached the Assembly from the Ecclesiastical Committee in the course of the years 1790 and 1791, to be accepted under *force majeure* by the King and to be passed into law.

Thus did the Assembly, advancing in its confiscation and proscriptions, plunge into its war upon religion, with its constitutional oath and constitutional stipends producing in turn constitutional and non-constitutional bishops and priests, delivering over, at last, the clergy who desired to remain true to both their faith and their spiritual head, to outlawry and massacre.

The religious life of the nation was thus interrupted by the suspension of Divine Service and the Sacraments, and many centres of corporal works of mercy were destroyed. Many objects of piety valuable in themselves or by tradition passed into secular hands, and many pious foundations made by the faithful for the glory of God and the good of their souls—by which Mass had been said or some service held for centuries—were extinguished. The spiritual loss was immeasurable.

Many of the Commanderies of the Order were at once involved in these troubles by reason of the fact that the chaplains of the Order or the simple priests of obedience employed in them performed parochial duties also in their districts.

'*The Sorrow of a Schism*'

The Order resisted the application of the new laws, notably in Paris. Thus the Receiver General, the Chevalier d'Estourmel, writes on April 9, 1791, to the Grand Master in the following terms:

> 'We have the sorrow of finding ourselves to-day in this Capital in the middle of a schism openly declared by the ordinance of Monseigneur the Archbishop of Paris against the Bishop[1] and his parish priests *intrus*. On Sunday last there was made an installation of the Curés of the new parishes and the closure of those which have been suppressed.
>
> 'We have learnt since morning that in consequence of this ordinance the seals will be placed on the churches of the Temple and S. Jean de Latran as reformed parishes. I have begged the Abbé Ricard at the Temple and Monsieur le Commander de Walton at S. Jean de Latran to insert a protestation in the document presented by the Representative of the Mayor.
>
> 'It appears that if we limit our religious services by not including the Sacraments of Baptism and Marriage we shall be permitted as a foreign Order to remain for the moment. . . .
>
> 'We are insensibly being deprived of all public religious functions.'
>
> 'It has been decided that the Districts will pay curés a stipend of 1200 frs. per annum, but that the funds of the

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[1] Talleyrand.

Order marked out for the curés and accordingly *spiritualisés* will be sold to the profit of the nation. I have just been opposing this last arrangement with a deputy on the Ecclesiastical Committee and I have warned him that according to orders from Malta we will oppose such sales to the end.'

Troubles at Toulouse

Reports to Malta from the Grand Priory in Toulouse in the summer of this year, 1791, also indicate the difficulties of the Order.

The Grand Prior of Toulouse was Fra Jean Riqueti de Mirabeau, appointed in 1789. His residence, the Hotel S. Jean, was a building of remarkable beauty, having been rebuilt in 1688 by the architect J. P. Rival in a purely Parisian style. It still stands to-day in the rue S. Jean, restored by the Municipality, marked in the guide book as a place not to be missed. Dependent on this Grand Priory were, amongst others, the Collegiate church of S. John and the churches of S. Antoine. There was also the house of the 'Dames Malthaises', the nuns of the Order.

When the 'fête Dieu' approached in June 1791, and the usual Provincial Assembly was to be held, the Grand Prior was absent in Paris, acting in concert with de Virieu there. A young Knight, the Chev. de Barsac, received only in 1789, was left as the Grand Prior's 'luogotenente'. The senior officer of the Order remaining in the town was the Chev. De Montazet, Receiver for the district. These two Knights had difficulty, duly reported to Malta, in assembling their local Chapter. Only five professed Knights out of nearly sixty answered the summons.

From Paris the Bailli de Sade had written to them that 'his *confrères de France* in the Temple had suppressed all the "appareil exterieur" which the person of Mons. le duc d'Angoulême renders inseparable from the Chapter over which he presides' and that they were all wearing secular dress. De Montazet and de Barsac accordingly counselled their colleagues in Toulouse to follow a quiet line. They did not, however, omit the religious side of the Assembly. This was possible because several priests of the Order still remained in the town, and so Malta learnt that the Knights heard the Mass of the Holy Ghost and said the appointed prayers. They made a point of not dining together 'in commons' after the meeting in the prioral hôtel, as was the custom, but retired each to his private quarters in the town, presumably in secular dress.

'Mons. de Barsac and I,' writes de Montazet, 'both agree that any action that makes the public talk is undesirable.'

The counsels of quiescence of the young Knight and the old Receiver however came to be disregarded. We find de Montazet writing angrily to Malta that 'the imprudence of a priest had brought a horde of soldiers down upon the Church and College of S. Jean. They have searched the house for arms'. They suspected this house as a counter-revolutionary centre, for they had heard that Royalists were being harboured there. 'In vain it was explained,' continues De Montazet, 'that the barrels of powder which were observed being hurried in on a "charrette" were only barrels of coffee, which had been purchased by a member of the Order. The soldiers have locked the doors and taken the keys.' The imprudence of the priest was surely a mild one. He had only 'asked the municipality for permission to preach a public panegyric on S. Jean their patron', but his action had drawn the attention of the authorities to the Order and had given some enemy an opportunity to denounce them. The Receiver, seeing his counsels disregarded, stood by inactive in his office. 'I had neither the courage nor the inclination to interfere,' he wrote.

The remainder of this report of De Montazet illustrates the operation of the new laws directed against the independent religious exercises of the Order in this corner of France. We can see at close quarters the workings of the Revolution, still with some spirit of compromise on both sides.

'The constituted authorities of Toulouse,' continues the Receiver de Montazet, 'came together and announced that henceforth no church should be allowed to remain open to the public except those which should function as parish churches and be served by clergy who had taken the oath to the civil constitution; they prepared large placards to this effect, containing an immense exposition of the regulation followed by twenty-three articles, and placed them upon the walls very markedly and with great solemnity, no doubt to prepare the minds of the people for respectful submission to the law.'

'Gentlemen of the Municipality'

The first to be attacked was the convent of the nuns of the Order—'les Dames Malthaises' as they were called. It was invaded by two officers of the Municipality, to require the community to conform to the law by taking the obnoxious civic oath, and the Mother Prioress to give particulars of her establishment.

The Mother Prioress immediately reported the matter to the Commander de Montazet in the Grand Commandery at Toulouse. In a series of seven letters of many small quarto pages, written in a large, firm, and angular handwriting, we can trace the development of the affair, for the Commander forwarded them all to Valletta. The narrative of the Prioress evidenced both good temper and natural shrewdness.

From these letters we gather that two representatives of the Municipality, by name Messieurs de Rey and de Ferran, came to the convent and presented an official form for her to fill in and sign. The Prioress told them that she refused to do so without the approbation of the Commander, but promised, however, that she would send a reply to them that evening. To this they consented, but before leaving, they locked the chapel doors and took the keys away with them.

The Mother Prioress then had a consultation with the faithful Sacristan. He was not, however, very imaginative—he only thought that the Commander would not at all approve of having allowed the gentlemen of the Municipality to take the keys of the church. The Prioress must send a letter by the Sacristan to the Commander to find a way out. In it, she expressed the opinion that a petition to the department would be favourably received and solve the difficulty. It does not seem that the Commander's reply was very helpful. The good Mother Prioress, therefore, proceeded with her own plan of a petition, drew up and forwarded a document in which she indignantly asked the municipality 'by what right do they designate her as the Prioress of the "*Ci-Devant* Religieuses de Malte"?'—for they used this obnoxious adjective. She would accept, however, the decree of the Assembly as 'having been taken with the object of assuring public tranquillity', and was ready to conform to all the dispositions therein contained. She declared that her house was one only for alms and she undertook not to introduce any strange priest into the church. On this, the Municipal officers gave her back the keys, requesting her not to change the chaplain without notifying the Municipality.

But the Mother Prioress did not, apparently, sign the obnoxious declaration. An original lies still unsigned in the letter-book at Malta, inscribed: 'À Madame la Prieure des Dames Malthaises', and marked by the clerk of the Municipality 'pour être signée d'elle'. In one of her letters she incidentally remarks that the huissier who bore the many missives from the authorities saluted her 'very politely'.

The Commander de Montazet did not wish to intervene in the matter between the convent and the municipality; not that he was afraid, but because this foundation was directly responsible to the Grand Master at Malta, who had placed an Administrator in charge, the Chevalier d'Auffroy (*sic*). This Administrator was actually in the house, as de Montazet learnt, when the officials first called, but he did not appear—whether from prudence or fear we do not know.

We have neither time nor space to tell how valiantly de Montazet acted when it came to his turn to deal with 'the gentlemen of the municipality' in this summer in Toulouse. One of them, he sadly noted, was a Chevalier of the Order of S. Louis. They came to require him to sign the form in relation to the Grand Priory and the Church of S. Antoine, for which he accepted responsibility. The attack on religion was not yet by sheer force but by the formalities of the law, and the situation was open to argument and reason. De Montazet was able adroitly to resist and defeat the civic intrusions and to open and close his churches at will. The wordy warfare in which this chevalier gained a temporary triumph may all be read in great detail in his report to Malta. He has tried, he concludes, 'to prevent the Order falling in France beneath the imperious decrees of an anarchy which rears itself on the debris of the Throne and the Altar', and he is happy to state that 'the phantom has vanished and tranquillity is restored in the house where a few hours before were fears and alarms'.

The Commander's efforts and the bravery of the Mother Prioress, for it was such, counted for nothing in the larger movements of the revolution; but they are worthy of record as examples of devotion to duty. They were willing to die, and perhaps they did, for their Faith.

A year later, on the 30th September, 1792, a Chevalier de Savin, describing himself as 'chargé d'affaires de l'Ordre de Malte et son représentant à Toulouse', issued a 'protestation to the Municipality' against the seizure by the Maire and officers of all the property of the Order in the town of Toulouse, including the very title-deeds, as 'an act against the law of nations, the faith and tenor of treaties'.

* * *

A Chevalier de Montazet was murdered on the 9th June, 1798, by the insurgent Maltese at Benghaisa Point when the French army under Bonaparte invaded Malta.

CHAPTER VI

EMIGRATION

Emigration—The Flight of the King—'Our Lotto'—The King and the Constitution

WITH the opening of the new year, 1790, one of the most vital problems confronting the King and the Assembly was that of emigration. This exodus, founded on fear and hatred of the new régime, was proceeding at an alarming rate. It withdrew from the country current cash and capital and from the Government the support of many nobles and their followers. It brought hostile reports and angry emigrés to foreign courts, London, Rome, and Turin, to lay the foundations of the coming European coalition against France. All the seats in the diligences to the frontier towns and the coasts were booked for months ahead.

But, in the Assembly, the pitiless revolutionary machine moved on and forced the Ministry to fresh and ruthless measures.

Accordingly, on 5 January, M. de Custine proposed that all persons enjoying revenue from property in France who should leave the country or had left should lose the same if they did not return within four months. This proposal, which was carried, naturally affected the Knights of Malta who had emigrated, or who were on duty at Malta.

In this debate there spoke for the Knights a Deputy, M. Regnaud de S. Jean d'Angely. 'It is impossible,' he argued in an elaborate speech, 'to include the Order of Malta in this proposal. They are attached by the laws of honour and of religion to duties outside the Kingdom.'

The consequence of the speech of this clever young lawyer was interesting.

The Chargé d'Affaires at Paris forwarded a copy of it to Malta. The Congregation d'État there was so pleased with it that when the situation in France grew worse the Grand Master ordered Doublet to write to Cibon to find how best to attach this Deputy to the service of the Order. Regnaud d'Angely proved indifferent to the honour of a Cross which was suggested. It was then proposed that a pension be given to him from the day that the Assembly, by his exertions, might recognize the Order as a neutral State and restore all its Commanderies to it. This proposal did not attract. Finally it was agreed that the Deputy should be received free of the usual charges into the Order as a 'servant d'armes', and be made Agent General in Paris with an annual pension for life of 6000 Maltese 'écus', about 15,000 livres.

Unfortunately the fate of the Order was not settled in the Constituent Assembly, and Regnaud was not able to make a special case for it before them. When the fatal August 5, 1792, arrived, and a Republic was declared in the next month by the National Convention, the Deputy, who, though of advanced views, had voted with the Feuillants, had to fly from Paris. He was followed to Douai and thrown into prison there, where he remained until the fall of Robespierre.

We are to hear more of him in Malta in 1798.

The Flight of the King and Royal Family

A hundred different plots—open or below the surface, half-begun, half-finished, by Frenchmen and by foreigners, were attempted, in the first three years of the Revolution, to destroy the National Assembly and to extricate the King and Royal Family from their position of political prisoners in Paris—all to no avail.

There was that of the Austrian, Hee, in 1790, by which Marie Antoinette hoped to secure the diplomatic intervention of the Emperor Joseph, and there was the declaration of Pilnitz, in 1791, by which seven foreign Powers 'declared the position of the King of France a matter of common interest to the Sovereigns of Europe'. Some of the plots were really initiated; some were chimerical; some, like that of Madame de Staël, were deliberately withheld from the King. The idea of escape from Paris was realized, as the reader knows, in the actual flight to Varennes, more correctly called the flight to Montmédy, which was the avowed objective of the Royal Family. In this project a member of the Order played a definite part.

At Paris, the Chevalier d'Estourmel, the Receiver General, through his zeal for the Royalist cause, had collected on his responsibility and stored in the chests of the Order the sum of 200,000 francs—which he gave to the King to assist him in the flight to Montmédy.

When, at the trial of Louis XVI, the papers of the King and his supporters were examined, a receipt was found which showed that the sum of 993,000 livres had been received by the Marquis de Bouillé from the King. This document recorded the exact amounts distributed, in furtherance of the plot, to the officers and other faithful friends on the long route to the frontier. This money may well have included the sum supplied by the Chevalier d'Estourmel.

All this time, d'Estourmel, as we know, was responsible, in the absence of a proper Ambassador, with the Bailli de Virieu, for the affairs of the Order in France. We cannot find that de Virieu, whatever his feelings, gave any support to this undertaking of his colleague, or that he even knew of it at the time—though he could hardly have been unaware that something was afoot.

D'Estourmel naturally felt the failure of the flight of the King very acutely. In taking sides between the King and the people, he, a high dignitary of the Order, had broken its professed neutrality. His action had embarrassed his colleagues in the Temple and prejudiced the whole Order in France. This so weighed on his mind that he became insane for several months. From this affliction, however, he recovered.

In the next year, 1792, his devotion to the Royal Family drew him into a still more perilous position, and we find him openly defending the King in the Tuileries on the fatal day of 10 August.

His known partisanship, therefore, for the Royalist cause, both in the flight to Varennes and on this last occasion, made it difficult for him to protect from the attacks of the Assembly the financial interests of the Order for which he was responsible.

On the failure of the flight an effort to save the King, too, appears to have been directed from Malta itself, though unofficially. Two frigates stood by near the frontier of the Midi, flying the red and white flag of the Order. They waited for a passenger who never came. It had been proposed evidently to bring him to some neutral port—Genoa or elsewhere. Malta was hardly itself to be the destination of the expected traveller. The Court of Spain, writes Thiers, prevented this undertaking maturing. They feared that a further move to rescue the King was bound to fail, and would only injure his position the more.

'*Our Lotto*'

What did the Grand Master know of all this? De Rohan, it is said, was informed of the part played by d'Estourmel only in a letter of the Bailli de Virieu from Lausanne, in Switzerland, whither this Grand Cross had fled during the horrible massacres in Paris of September '92.

In writing to the Grand Master, de Virieu dared only to make cryptic allusions to this venture. It was called 'Our Lotto,' and the accomplices were the 'tireurs', and their plans, the 'ternes' and the 'quaternes'—representing various figures which they 'played' in this dangerous game.

It is probable that de Rohan knew very fully, though unofficially, of these intrigues. His kinsman Prince Victor de Rohan, a member of the Order, joined in 1791 the Allies and émigrés at Coblentz. A long correspondence appears to have been conducted between the Grand Master and this young man, judging from the letters over his signature remaining in the archives at Malta. In these he tells of interviews with the Duke of Brunswick and with the Comte d'Artois; and speaks very freely of the attitude and influence of Marie Antoinette in relation to affairs in France.

From the personal tone of these letters, the writer appears to have stood in very confidential and even affectionate relations with the Grand Master.

What letters or reports, we wonder, found their way to Malta, telling of these ventures? What of them exist to-day?

It remains for historians in Malta to search the Archives and piece together the whole story. It is known that Bonaparte, on reaching Valletta, sent his Secretary Poussielgue to seize the Archives of the Order, anxious to know of the immediate relations of the Order with the enemies of the Directory.

What may Poussielgue not have found, in his exhaustive search in the letter-books concerning the fate of the Royal Family? It may be, indeed, that incriminating letters were destroyed by the Knights concerned before the Order fell in 1798.

The King and the Constitution

The new Constitution, so long in the making, at length appeared. It was presented in September 1791 to the Assembly, and adopted by them, and carried to the King for acceptance or refusal. The King accepted it and thought fit, or was required by the Executive, to notify the other Sovereigns of Europe of the fact.

The Grand Master was informed in the following letter:

> 'Mon Cousin,
>
> 'Je me fais un devoir de vous informer que je viens

d'accepter la constitution, qui m'a été présentée au nom de la nation et d'après laquelle la France sera d'or en avant gouvernée. Je ne doute pas que vous ne preniez part à un évènement aussi important pour mon Royaume et c'est avec un veritable plaisir que je saisis cette occasion pour vous renouveler les sentiments de mon estime et de mon amitié.

'Sur ce je prie Dieu, qu'il vous ait, mon cousin, en sa sainte garde.

[LOUIS.]

'Écrit à Paris, *le* 20 *Septembre*, 1791.'

Thus was announced this act of the King which so disastrously divided his adherents in France, isolating the unhappy monarch from many friends and bringing him nearer to the destruction of the monarchy.

A document, amongst many others on this affair, reached the Grand Master at this time, and described the scene. It is dated Paris, 20 September, '91, and is unsigned. It runs :

'Here is the discourse which M. Thouret made to the King, in the name of the deputation, in presenting to him the Constitution :

'"Sire, the representatives of the Nation come to present to your Majesty the 'acte constitutionnel' which consecrates the imprescriptible rights of the French people, which renders to the throne its true dignity and which will regenerate the government of the Empire."

'The King accepts the constitution and makes a reply to the deputation which he had written with his own hand in the following terms :

'"I accept the constitution which the National Assembly has presented to me : I shall convey to them my decision with as little delay as the examination of so important a subject requires. I have decided to remain at Paris (they had proposed to him to go wherever he liked to prevent anyone from saying that he was not free). I shall give my orders to the Commandant General of the National Guard of Paris for the service of my guard."'

This report was enclosed in a letter from the Bailli de Loras, then at Naples. The covering letter to the Grand Master shows the anger of the Royalists at the King's action :

'The news from Paris of yesterday, Monseigneur, is detestable. It tells us that the King has accepted the constitution. He is not content to accept it purely and simply as they asked him and as he should have done, but he conveyed his acceptance in the most shocking and infamous manner as you will see from the speech which he made on the subject and which I have the honour to send you.'

CHAPTER VII
IN THE PROVINCES

In the Provinces—Bending to the Storm—Fête de la Confédération—A Proclamation by the King—Rumours

In the Provinces

IN the provinces in 1790, '91 and '92, the Grand Priors, the 'Receveurs', the Commanders, and Chaplains anxiously watched from afar the course of affairs in the Assembly. They reported to Malta the reactions in their districts of the various movements in Paris.

There are found accordingly, in the Archives of Malta, official reports of the six 'Receveurs' of the Order in France, directed to the 'procuratori del Tesoro', covering the years 1790–93 from Nantes, Marseilles, Lyons, Poitiers, Toulouse, and Paris. This collection of first-hand reports reflecting local events by spectators competent to judge them philosophically, if from a unique angle, must afford in the hands of skilled historians most valuable material for a further knowledge of the early years of the Revolution.

Often the councils of the departments, armed with increasingly terrible powers, as the Assembly passed decree after decree, did violence to the lands, buildings, and persons of the Knights, taking the law into their own hands or anticipating the law. Then, no doubt, the Knights inspected the fortifications—long unused—of their Commanderies and wondered, even if they had the means to put them into a state of defence, would it be prudent to do so.

Bending to the Storm

Desperate efforts were made locally by the members of the Order to bend to the storm. They very pointedly exercised their functions as good Hospitallers. Ingenious devices were reported, simple or elaborate, used here and there, to pacify the people as opportunities allowed. The letter-books reveal the dark days that were closing in upon the Knights remaining at their posts in France. A pathos lies in the futility of their efforts.

Foremost in a campaign of conciliation on these lines was the Receiver at Marseilles, the Bailli de Foresta.

Diplomacy and daring combined seemed to have been the keynote of his character. From the beginning of the Revolution, as we have seen, he furnished information upon public affairs in the Kingdom to the Grand Master. He had methodically collected and despatched to Malta in many boxes books and pamphlets dealing with the political controversies of the moment. He was soon to take journeys to Paris, to suffer arrests and imprisonments, then to return again to duty at Marseilles, and keep in touch with his chiefs in Malta.

Marseilles was, as the reader knows, a storm-centre of the Revolution. De Foresta gives a picture of this city on June 29, 1790:

'Your illustrissimi Signori ought to be informed of the frightful agitations which have been taking place in the town of Marseilles. Standing without defence since the troops were taken away, surrounded on all sides by the most violent insurrections which have done away with hope of emigration, and depending only on the goodwill of the people, it is with the greatest attention that I apply myself to continue to captivate it, as my only safeguard. . . .'

'It is necessary,' in his words, to 'rechauffer la bienveillance du peuple.'

'The only prompt and efficacious means which I always use with success in the most alarming crises are those of alms and acts of charity—more assured shelters than the forts and citadels which have not been able to shelter their commandants from the insurrections of the people! These maintain me independent in Marseilles in spite of the counsels and anonymous advice which have been showered on me to take the Treasury of the Order to Avignon, which is considered a safe and inviolable asylum. Certainly if I was weak enough to quit my post I should follow this advice.

'One Grand Prior and other members of the Order are proscribed, and they are seeking safety for their persons.

'I have used,' he says, '3000 livres in charity . . . twelve notables of the Town came to my house as a mark of esteem.'

The report of this policy is favourably received by Messeigneurs of the Treasury at Malta:

'Your determination,' they write, 'entirely conforms to the object of our Institution. It can also advance our interests with public opinion which is so necessary in this of all moments (June 1790), when this opinion can bring so much influence upon the decision of our future lot and prevent the actions of enemies whom we may have in the Assembly. We express our appreciation of your zeal for la Mère Commune since the beginnings of the Revolution.'

Fête de la Confédération

The Assembly had ordained in 1790 a national fête to commemorate the Fall of the Bastille in the previous year.

The first fête of the Confédération approached, and by its professions of unity, filled the hearts of many with hopes of peace. De Foresta writes to the Grand Master that he has attended an important meeting. 'In a large gathering of patriots in this city it has been decided to establish an office with the title " Bureau de Conciliation ". It is composed of several lawyers, public men, and business people. Its object is to promote the settlement of disagreements between parties. . . . They had difficulty in finding suitable premises. I advanced to the platform and announced that the house of the Chargé d'Affaires of the Order of Malta was the asylum of charity. I offered it to them and gave them an apartment.'

'There is a party,' he writes, 'in the new municipality of Marseilles who wish to injure us, just as the Chambers of Commerce are favourable to us.' Accordingly, de Foresta canvassed the merchants of Marseilles and other seaports and obtained a series of resolutions in favour of the Order as the protectors of their commerce. These were duly forwarded to the Bailli de Virieu and d'Estourmel in Paris.

De Virieu writes to de Foresta in reply, on June 21, 1790, with that hope ever destined to be deferred, 'our affairs will be discussed in the National Assembly after the 20th July, the day when the " confédérés " from the Provinces leave Paris for their homes. This will be the moment of the crisis '.

De Foresta was still hopeful as to the effects of the great fête and wrote again to Malta in terms of almost fervent patriotism about this first anniversary of the famous fall of the Bastille :

'We await the 14th July next, fixed for the general Federation of the Kingdom, the day when at the same hour, all Frenchmen without distinction or exception will join with one another in a solemn oath to obey the new Constitution.

'It will be the time in which will be established peace, calm, and order. They assure us that on this day, dissensions and even personal hatreds and individual resentments will be removed and buried in mutual embraces. In this epoch now at hand our days will flow along under the safeguard of the nation, the law, and the King, in complete tranquillity. Let us accept the augury!'

To preserve the peace the National Guards were enrolled. The Bailli de Foresta joined them, at first as a mere private, and, he tells us, mounted the ramparts with his rifle. Later he assumed, at the request of the authorities—no doubt some of the notables mentioned in the letter above—the post of commandant.

He had found in the local brigandage the opportunity for a 'beau geste'. 'An officer,' a letter of his states, 'commanding a patrol of the National Guard had been wounded by the malefactors who devastate the countryside about Marseilles. This officer came of the farmer class; he had very little money and a large family. I have sheltered him in the name of our Order and I have contributed to his complete recovery. In consequence, the farmers in the neighbourhood have made an undertaking between themselves to fly to the protection of my house, if it should be threatened with any danger.'

These and many other such matters he reported to Malta, in lengthy letters laboriously written by his own hand. He feared, however, that in the critical situation he trespassed too much upon the time of Messeigneurs of the Venerable Chamber.

Far from it, Messeigneurs assured him, in their reply:

'The details you give us enchant us always more and more . . . we applaud, above all, the matter of the 3000 livres you have distributed in alms in your city, alms which have produced the thanks of a deputation of a dozen notables who waited upon you. . . . We applaud the part you have played "en simple fusilier" . . . likewise we applaud warmly the particular care you have taken of the officer of the National Guard.'

For two years de Foresta thus held out in Marseilles.

The summer of 1792 arrived. The Order of Malta had not yet been declared an illegal organization. While individual acts of violence against the Commanderies were reported, so far no specific decree had been carried against them in the Assembly. The Deputy Vincent of the Marne was, however, preparing a devastating *projet de décret* of confiscation and awaited a favourable moment to launch it.

War was already declared against the foreign Powers. The French troops again marched to the frontiers; the enemy had invaded France. The battle of Valmy was soon to bring their first victories to the French arms, the future armies of Napoleon were being trained.

A Proclamation by the King

It was very natural that under cover of the increasing commotions, acts of hostility against the Order should be perpetrated by the democratic forces of the nation. In June, therefore, of this year, the Chevalier d'Estourmel made one last effort, by an appeal to the King, to protect the Order, and succeeded in extracting a remarkable 'Proclamation in the Name of the French Nation and by the King' in favour of the Order, dated June 11, 1792, and countersigned by the Minister Secretary of the Department of External Affairs.

This proclamation stated that the King placed under the protection of the French Nation the Commanderies of the Order of Malta and their dependents. It called upon the 'Marshals-des-camps' and all the higher command to respect the property of the same. In testimony of this, 'permission was given to the said commanderies to place on their doors this present safeguard'. This document was signed by the King, and countersigned by M. de Servan, Ministre Secrétaire d'Etat des Affaires Étrangères, by de Virieu and by Cibon. The Knights had copies of it duly printed at the Imprimerie de Jésus, Imprimeur de l'Ordre in Paris; which were distributed and placed on their doors. The Minister Servan was soon to go over to the Republic against the King. The King who signed this document in favour of the Order was to become two months later, in August 1792, a prisoner in the Temple in Paris.

From Marseilles, in the tragic time of the August of this year, de Foresta, vainly following a policy of conciliation, sent letters of warning to Malta.

'In the course of three days,' he writes on the 2nd of the month, 'I have expended more than 5000 livres. . . . One should pursue the path of most exact neutrality and the most scrupulous circumspection at Malta. A single spark of discord there will produce a fire which will consume the property and the individuals of the Order in France . . . you must be completely dumb.

'The people have yesterday, they say, burnt a man to death for having spoken in disrespectful terms of the nation!'

On August 18, 'news terrible and unexpected' reached the town:

'We have learnt only now definitely of the attack on the "Château des Thuilleries", the general massacre of the Swiss Guards and the soldiers inside, the loss of a number of National Guards who assailed the place, and the deaths of various persons and even of several deputies. The King and the Royal Family have fled to the midst of the National Assembly.'

They had their own troubles, too, in the seaport:

'The spectacle of the horrible executions, which, in spite of oneself, one cannot help seeing; the dead bodies mutilated, hung up, dragged or scattered through all the parts of the town, the cries of the populace mingling their insults with drunken utterances—all this paralyses at the moment every moral faculty . . . I cannot restore my mind to the tranquillity necessary for my work.'

The fate of the Commandery of Manosque caused anxiety. Here in the chapel of Our Lady of Philermo lay the body of Bienheureux Gerard, Founder of the Order, and before it had burnt through the centuries (until the Revolution extinguished it) a lamp maintained by the Bailli de Manosque, a shrine which might well be considered the spiritual centre of the whole Order.

This Commandery was, at the time, entrusted to a Chevalier de Moues, who was administrator for life. He had doubtless displayed over its doors, along with the arms of the Order, a printed copy of the manifesto of the King to save the place from invasion. De Foresta learnt, however, that the Administrator of Manosque was forced to fly and had gone to Aix and, later, that a notice had appeared on the walls of Marseilles signed by Servan, now Minister for War, stating that 'the safeguard of the King will not have effect', and 'that general officers commanding will lodge their troops, with a just reparation, on the properties of the Order of Malta'.

Rumours

Dame Rumour played a vast part in this Revolution, as in many others. De Foresta reports stories in circulation of 'terrible' punishments meted out to counter-revolutionaries, as well as tales of 'atrocities' by Royalists. He believes the latter are circulated to promote disorders.

The death of M. de Rochmaure evidenced the fury of the people. He was arrested at his country place, conducted to Toulon and executed because he was convicted of having treated some persons, who were annoying him, with the remark that 'they would soon be sent to prison or the galleys'.

Likewise a M. de Flotte was executed. It appears he was a member of the old administration of Toulon and had discovered a plot to liberate from the chains of the galleys the 'forçats' there, and to supply them with arms from the arsenal. The people resented, if this be a correct interpretation of the letter, his interference in this movement towards liberty.

Political rumours, too, were rife, and were duly reported to Malta:

'They say here as a certainty that England is going to declare that she will observe the most perfect neutrality in the affairs of France. The furthest she will go will be to act as a mediator between the nation and the King, and only in regard to the safety of his person. The King of Sardinia, they assure us, will preserve the same neutrality.'

The Legislative Assembly terminated in the third week of September. 'The motives for the calling of the National Convention are accordingly published and affixed to all the walls of the city. It is to be remarked, in this connection, that from the first meetings of the National Convention all the decrees, proclamations, advertisements, in a word everything issued by the constitutional authorities are dated in the First Year of the French Republic.' The Monarchy is, indeed, gone.

But even in a Revolution, routine business must go on! A chevalier, A. du Guerdan, dies. It is the duty of de Foresta as Receiver to see to his 'dépouillement', that is to take an inventory of the property of the deceased, to sell certain effects, such as his clothes; to see to the distribution of one-fifth of his possessions according to his will, and the dispatch of four-fifths to the Treasury at Malta, with all his books and documents for the Library there, and to dispose of his sword and cross. Accompanied by the faithful La Font, he enters the apartment of the deceased Knight, in a street in some fashionable quarter of Marseilles. They find 'no furniture, not a single piece of money, not even the smallest assignat'! This Knight had, alas, died in abject poverty. De Foresta is probably too shrewd to sell this poor fellow's clothes. In another place the Commander has attempted to sell the clothes of a deceased Knight by public auction, insistent upon 'rules and regulations' and unheeding the new régime. The people become furious, attack the house of the deceased, and seize the clothes, saying they belong to the nation!

The archivist, Monsieur du Gros, in his important post in the Grand Priory of S. Giles, has been absent from duty. De Foresta does not understand why. The Grand Prior of Toulouse does not know where he has gone—it is thought to Arles. However, since the troubles there (where doubtless a Commandery has been attacked), he has given no signs of life. The Archivist at length writes from Arles, asking for his salary. De Foresta, kind-hearted, sends him a remittance, despite his apparent desertion of his post. Later he learns M. du Gros has been really ill, and a M. Boeuf is appointed as his substitute.

The letters of de Foresta in October 1792 are filled with many allusions to the marvellous and unexpected victories of the young Republican army over the Allies. Rumour reaches Marseilles of the siege of Verdun, abandoned by the Prussians. The King of Prussia and the Duke of Brunswick are reported prisoners. The names of Lukner and Kellerman come into the narrative. The French armies are reported to have entered Italy. Generals Anselme and Dumouriez have passed Nice and Villefranche. The French troops, it is said, have entered Italy without a single obstacle, the King of Sardinia has fled with all his forces and not a single shot of rifle or cannon has been fired!

Rumour becomes a reality. 'The flags from Villefranche,' the Receiver writes, 'have been brought here by General Anselme. They have been publicly carried through the town, accompanied by a procession of the people. They are afterwards placed on the altar of liberty. . . . A great expedition of ships is preparing in the harbour.'

The citizens of Marseilles must be in the fray. Volunteers are called for by the Maire, to fill the places in Paris of those who fell in the affair of 10 August at the 'Thuilleries'. It is thus the patriots presented to the people the incidents of that tragic day, as a Royalist attack upon their lives and liberties. A new enrolment, too, of volunteers takes place for the armies on the frontier, and the citizens are invited to lend or give these young soldiers arms. Custine has taken Viane and Spire—Royalist towns. The persecution of the Royalists proceeds in the district. Many émigrés are maltreated, fly to the sea or to the mountains and perish there.

'There is a terrible decree against these émigrés. This decree is put up on the walls. It threatens with execution, without reprieve, within twenty-four hours, all émigrés taken with arms in their hands.'

The last letter of this period from which we quote concludes on a homely note. De Foresta is not forgetful of duty done; and requests from the Venerable Chamber at Malta a small pension for the widow of one de Maurin, a clerk recently deceased, who had given good and faithful service to the Receiver in his office at Marseilles. He asks also for the full Cross of the Order for La Font.

CHAPTER VIII

THE KING COMES TO THE TEMPLE

The King comes to the Temple August 12, 1792—*Compensation for Disturbance*

DE FORESTA had been correctly informed when he reported to Malta 'news terrible and unexpected'. It was, alas, true that the King had been attacked by the mob in the Palace of the Tuileries and that the Swiss Guards had been massacred. The King and Royal Family had fled to the Assembly itself for safety, as this was then meeting in the Riding School adjoining the Palace. Here, in a reporter's box, they spent an agitated and miserable fifteen hours, while the insurrection raged in the faubourgs of Paris.

'The Assembly anxiously waited,' wrote Thiers, 'the issue of the combat. At length at eleven o'clock at night they heard the shouts of victory a thousand times repeated. The doors yielded to the pressure of a mob intoxicated with joy and fury. The hall was filled with wrecks that had been brought thither, and with the Swiss Guards whose lives had been spared in order to do homage to the Assembly by this act of popular clemency. Meanwhile the King and his family, confined within the narrow box, witnessed the ruin of their throne and the joy of their conquerors. The President Vergniaud had for a moment quitted the chair, for the purpose of drawing up the decree of dethronement; he returned, and the Assembly passed that celebrated decree to this effect:

> Louis XVI is, for the time being, suspended from royalty;
> A plan of education is directed for the prince royal;
> A national convention is convoked.'

The Royal Family remained in the custody of the Assembly for the next two days, sleeping and eating in four cells placed at their disposal in the neighbouring convent of the Feuillants.

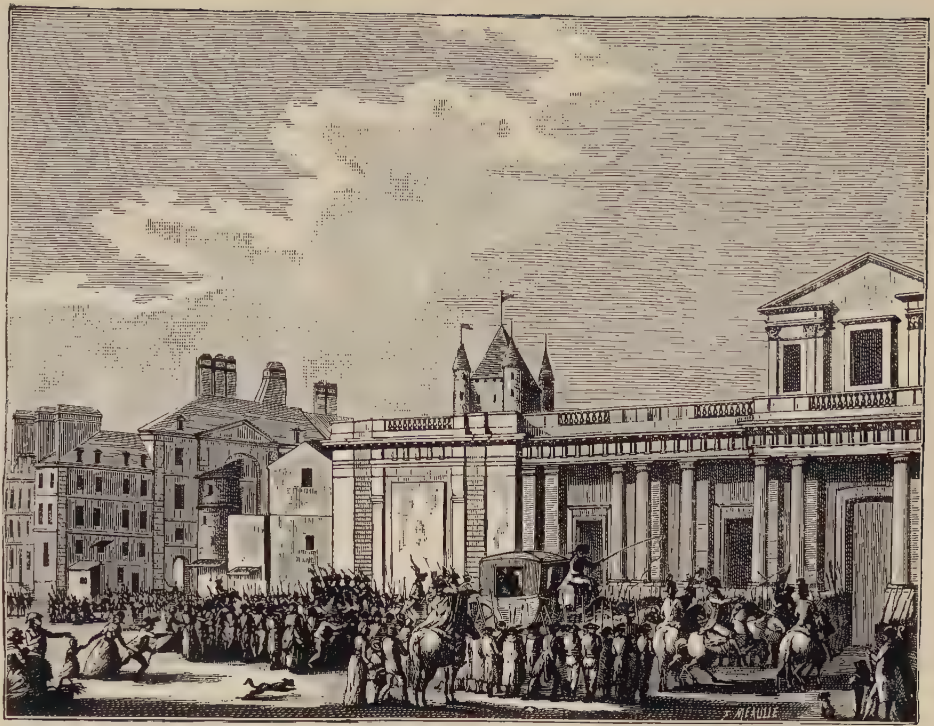
* * *

From this false asylum the King was taken on the evening of the 12th August to the Temple, a prisoner of the Nation. He was accompanied by the Queen and the Royal children;

the Princess Elizabeth and such other members of his household as the people, now directed by Danton, allowed him.

The Commune of Paris to whom the Assembly had entrusted the Royal prisoners, had themselves suggested the Temple as a place of imprisonment—they rejected the Luxembourg and the Ministry of Justice—declaring that they could not answer for the custody of the prisoners unless the Tower itself of that ancient stronghold was selected for their detention. Petion, the Maire of Paris, and Santerre, the Commandant General of the National Guards, who had been made responsible for the safety of the persons of the Royal Family, conducted them thither. As a procession of the worst elements of the mob accompanied the carriages, their progress was unduly slow and trying. They reached the Temple about seven o'clock on that warm August evening. The cortège entered through the classic gates of the Grand Prior's palace, which had been hurriedly prepared by the representatives of the Commune to receive the Royal Family.

The Enclos du Temple had until this August, 1792, been spared the scenes of violence which had marked other parts of Paris. It had indeed remained an oasis of comparative calm in a desert of destruction. The great hotels leased to noblemen were, it is true, empty and the church and other buildings of the Order closed. The Chapter General of the Grand Priory of France had not met in the Temple for over a year, the last Assembly there being held in June 1791, when fifteen young candidates were admitted Knights. The internal history of the Temple, in the months preceding this time when the municipality took it over, remains obscure. We do not know exactly what members of the Order lingered, and came and went furtively or openly, about their business or that of 'la Mère Commune'. The archivist, M. Barthelemy, a donat of devotion, had managed to remain in his official residence, the 'little tower', with his elegant furniture, books and pictures until he was forcibly ejected on the 10th or 11th August when representatives of the people came to prepare the principal storeys of the Great Tower for their prisoners. The Receiver General d'Estourmel was assuredly not there unless in secret. He had been with the King in the Tuileries on the 10th and was now in hiding. We may imagine that his assistant, the Abbé Ricard, had already quitted his quarters in the Temple, hastily destroying or carrying away such dangerous papers as he could. The Bailli de Crussol had,



THE KING AND ROYAL FAMILY ARRIVE AT THE TEMPLE
August 12, 1792

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with the termination of the Constituent Assembly, already joined his chiefs, the Comte d'Artois and the Duc de Berry, across the frontier.

Certain, therefore, it is that no Grand Prior, no Bailli, no Grand Cross—not a single Knight received the King and Queen when they came to the Temple on this August day of 1792.

⚜ ⚜ ⚜

Almost every hour of the captivity of the Royal Family has been described by historians from original documents which have since come to light. It is not possible in this book to dwell upon the details of this most moving story of durance vile.

Great clearances in the Enclos immediately followed the imprisonment. By the directions of the Municipality, walls and buildings were pulled down, trees were cut. In the Tower all the windows were shuttered on the outside and boards were placed between the battlements, where, only after a while, the King could take the air. Barriers were erected to isolate the people of Paris from the Royal Family and their little party, and generally to prevent all possible communication or rescue from outside.

The Temple was thus turned into a sort of fortress. Numerous detachments of the National Guard in turn formed the garrison. The Church was made a military post; a detachment of cavalry and cannoniers with their guns took up their position in the Enclos. No person was allowed to enter without a countersign from the Municipality, which was changed every day. Twelve commissioners of the General Council of Paris were ordered to keep watch, four at a time and in turn, without interruption night and day upon every movement of the prisoners and to report in writing on their tour of duty.

Abundant funds were placed at the disposal of the municipality for these and subsequent activities, 500,000 francs being voted in the first instance by the Assembly for the maintenance of the Royal Family pending the meeting of the approaching National Convention.

Compensation for Disturbance

Amongst the residents of the Enclos, whose houses and occupations were thus disturbed, were some few brave enough to ask the Government for compensation and sufficiently in their good graces to obtain it. We learn from the published accounts of the Municipality of Paris that a M. Perard, architect, obtained 12,500 francs as indemnity 'for the loss of his house demolished on the arrival of the King, for his books and collections lost, broken or damaged'.

The sacristan of the Church of the Temple, Lefebre, was compensated for the destruction of his house; likewise the concierge of the great gate, described as destitute; the huissier of the Prioral Palace, Le Sieur Huchet, for the loss of his employment, his name to appear in a decree of the Convention itself.

The Archivist of the Order was not so successful though he donned the uniform of the National Guard, and one of the most brilliant and humorous sketches of Le Nôtre is that depicting the efforts of M. Barthelemy to obtain compensation for his elegant pictures and his 'objets d'art'.

A number of humble people were compensated, like one Dusser, 'limonadier', for the 'non jouissance d'un café' established in the garden of the Temple, closed since the 'installation de Louis XVI', as the imprisonment of the King is politely described.

The contents of the Prioral Palace suffered badly. A certain Sieur Chevalier was sent by the Municipality to make an inventory of the furniture and effects of the ci-devant Comte d'Artois. It was found that much was missing and both the nation and the late owner were the losers. At the same time, Roland, Minister for the Interior, is much exercised in his mind as to what to do as to the existence in the Temple of a 'very great quantity of silver plate which appears to have been forgotten', reported to him in a 'denunciation' of a member of the General Council of the Commune.

CHAPTER IX

THE TRIBUNAL OF THE TERROR

Débâcle of the Royalists—A Tribunal of the Terror—The Trial of a Knight of Malta—Le Loi Spoliateur—The Convention

FOLLOWING the imprisonment of the King and Queen in the Temple, the Terror was to reign in Paris. There came the massacres of September, when bishops, priests, and religious who had refused to take the 'serment civique', Royalist suspects in Paris and elsewhere, and other adherents of the old régime or citizens not heart and soul in accord with the new Republic, were driven into prisons or other 'safe' places to be murdered.

Thousands of persons were forced by fear to fly from Paris, disguise themselves, or lie in hiding. Most of the Ambassadors of foreign Powers withdrew.

The Bailli de Virieu, too, thought it best now to quit Paris. As Ambassador of the Duc de Parme, he was entitled to diplomatic immunity and his papers were sacred, but the new Government was indifferent to such niceties.

To promote a patriotic anger against the Royalists, the Convention, with ruthless disregard of personal decency, published a volume containing the most intimate letters, seized by the law in the papers of prisoners or suspects or in the houses of émigrés, expressing their views or those of their friends upon the course of events. The publication of these letters, by revealing the mode of life of the writers and intimate domestic details, not intended for the world, was supposed to stir the people to a righteous fury against the aristocrats.

In this volume were included several letters of de Virieu, expressing very proper sentiments, and also the proclamation of the King in favour of the Order which the Chevalier d'Estourmel had procured in the previous June.

A Tribunal of the Terror

We have seen the tried fidelity of d'Estourmel when he stood beside the King in the Tuileries on that 10th August. In his house at the very same time was hiding his friend, the Marquis Bertrand de Moleville, another devoted servant of the King. Only an injury to his thigh, which prevented him walking, kept this ex-Minister from the danger zone. He had been able to take an active part in the secret meetings which had been held on the 4th August and following days in the gardens of M. de Montmorin, late Minister for Foreign Affairs. The Royalists having obtained knowledge of the intended insurrection of the Commune of Paris were plotting to remove the King from the city to a place of safety. The plan had to be abandoned as the King would not consent at the last moment to another 'evasion', on the grounds that he did not wish to embroil the country in Civil War.

The memoirs of the Marquis de Moleville, which he published as an émigré in London, give a vivid picture of Paris in those days, and have a particular interest for our story, as we find in them a curious account of the trial of a Knight of Malta (his own brother) before a tribunal of the Terror and incidentally get a last view of the Chevalier d'Estourmel:

'From accounts I received,' writes de Moleville, 'on the evening of August the 9th, I expected that the Palace would be attacked before daybreak; and I desired Buob[1] to send me hourly information of the progress of the insurrection. I did not close my eyes during the whole of that night, which I passed in the most cruel agitation. Even at half an hour after nine, on the morning of the tenth, I had not received any news; and from the profound calm which prevailed in that part of the town I inhabited, I began to hope that the King had found means to prevent the insurrection. But these hopes were soon destroyed. On hearing the noise of the cannon, I immediately dispatched two servants towards the Carrousel, by different ways, to know what was passing: but before their return, I was informed of every circumstance by one of Buob's agents, who came to me directly from the Palace, where he had passed the night; and from which he would not have been able to escape, notwithstanding his national uniform, if he had not said that he was sent by Santerre with a commission to the Municipality. He had come away immediately after the Royal Family had taken refuge in the Assembly. Soon after Buob sent his servant to give me notice that Manuel, the "procureur de la Commune", had just been invested by the Municipality with authority to keep a strict watch on the houses of all who were known to be attached to the King, that my name, and that of Monsieur de Montmorin, were at the head

[1] Who was murdered on 2 September, 1792. Vide Thiers.

of the list; that we ought, therefore, to leave our houses instantly, in order to escape the observation of the spies.

'The very idea of flying or concealing myself was so repugnant to my feelings, that Buob's advice made the same impression on me at first, as if he had proposed to me to commit a mean action; and nothing but the pressing entreaties of all my family, joined to the consideration that I still might be useful to the King, would ever have determined me to leave my house.

DRAMATIC APPEARANCE OF D'ESTOURMEL

'I went out leaning on my brother, the Chevalier Bertrand's arm (for I could not walk without assistance, on account of a complaint in my thigh), and I took refuge in the house of the Commander d'Estourmel, then Procureur Général of the Order of Malta, who lived at about six hundred paces from my house. I met him at his door, on his return from the Palace, where he had been ever since the preceding day, having miraculously escaped the almost general massacre of noblemen and gentlemen, who, like him, had gone to the King's assistance. He was pale, disordered, and without his sword. His looks expressed the deepest despair.

'"All is lost," said that brave and loyal chevalier, pressing my hand. "The King is in their power, and we shall never see him more."'

In a letter, written a few weeks later, which d'Estourmel got through to the Grand Master at Malta, we read that his house had been searched and his papers pillaged, that he had been in prison and then released. We hear little more of him in Doublet's memoirs save that he was somewhere in France, and that the Grand Master de Rohan hoped de Foresta and the other Knights might get into touch with him. As an active figure he thus passes from our story. He may have found his way to Malta later, as his name appears on de Rohan's death in 1797, in the Grand Master's Book of Debtors.

To continue the Minister's narrative:

'I remained four days at the house of the Commander d'Estourmel. Only two of my servants were informed of the place of my retreat; and my porter told all who came to enquire for me that I was gone to the country, yet I found that I was not in safety, for unknown persons were continually observed skulking near my house, and the servant who came to dress my hair in the morning was forced to come in a conspicuous manner, and stop at various places, in order to mislead the spies, one of whom was heard to assert that it was known I was hid in that quarter. I therefore left the Commander and took refuge in the house of a surgeon, who had known me from my early youth, and who had always been attached to my family, particularly to one of my brothers whom he was in the habit of seeing every day.

'This man's understanding was none of the clearest. He idolized the constitution of 1791 without well knowing why; and although he detested the crimes of the Revolution, he attributed them more to the obstinacy of the aristocrats, than to the villainy of the Jacobins. Petion was his hero: but he detested Robespierre.

'This man had a great regard for me. His zeal for the Revolution had ruined his business, and thrown him into poverty, but he was a perfectly honest man. I had nothing to fear from the treachery or indiscretion of his family.

'As there were about thirty lodgers in the same house, and amongst these several patriots, I recommended to my hosts to make no alteration in their way of living.

'I found that I had not left my own house sooner than necessary; for the very day after I was settled in the surgeon's house, two Commissaires of the Municipality, with six hundred of the National Guards, invested and searched my hôtel from top to bottom. Their only discoveries, however, were a few insignificant letters from the Princesse de Rochefort, which caused her to be taken up and detained three months in prison. They found a list of the members of the Austrian Committee, under Greek and Roman names, which was at first thought of great importance, as it was the most mysterious. A "procès-verbal" was ordered upon the subject of this list, consisting of thirty names: but the Commissary on examining it more attentively, perceived that the key to the names was on the same page: that the Abbé Siéyès was Calchas—Briffot, Ulysses—Condorcet, Narcissus—Dumouriez, Mithridates—Santerre Catiline, etc.

'After terminating their researches, the Commissaires discovered the trap-door that opened into the place where I had had two large safes. After examining the contents, they carried the whole with them, although not one letter or paper had any relation to public affairs. They sealed up all the doors, except those of the cellar, because they intended leaving a guard of twelve men at my house, and thought it proper that those men should have wine at their discretion. My cellar was unluckily sufficiently well stocked to furnish drink for them, and their friends did not spare it; but what was more unfortunate, my brother, who had continued to lodge at my house, was taken up, as also my valet de chambre.

'The Commissaires, on leaving my house, went with part of their escort to that of Monsieur d'Aubigni, my neighbour and intimate friend, in hopes of finding me. From thence, they went to rue du Chaume, to the house of Monsieur Vernier, my father-in-law, where Madame Bertrand had taken refuge on 10 August. They behaved with great insolence and brutality. They carried my brother and father-in-law, in spite of his age and infirmities, before the Municipality. My valet de chambre was thrown into prison, and every day threatened to be guillotined if he did not reveal to them the place of my concealment. Luckily he did not know it. He gained his liberty a few days after, through the interest of one of his friends. My father-in-law and my brother were set at liberty after a detention of thirty-six hours.'

It must here be explained that the Marquis Bertrand de Moleville had two brothers, one the above mentioned, by name the Chevalier Jean André Bertrand de Moleville, who was a Knight of Malta, the other the Abbé Bertrand de Moleville, to whom he now alludes:

'My brother, the Abbé, who lodged in the rue de Prouvaires, fearing the same fate, prepared to change his lodgings, and had his effects secretly removed. This was observed by a patriot, who was his neighbour, and who went and denounced him as a suspected person to the Municipality; his arrest was immediately ordered. While the Commissaires were at his house, taking an inventory of his papers, my brother, the Chevalier, came to inform him of his being set at liberty, and was directly taken up anew, on the absurd pretext of having connections with a person declared to be suspected. Upon the same principle, the surgeon, at whose house I lodged, was arrested, an unlucky chance having brought him to my brother's house at that moment. They were all three conducted in a fiacre to the Municipality, accompanied and insulted by a numerous populace, who, without knowing who they were or what they were charged with, demanded with loud exclamations that they might be carried to the guillotine.

'My surgeon, whose civism was known, was released in two hours, but one of my brothers was sent to the prison of La Force, and the other to that of the Abbaye.'

The Trial of a Knight of Malta

The grotesque trial of his brother, the Chevalier J. A. Bertrand de Moleville, is next described with its unexpected and happy ending.

Taine, in his analysis of Terrorist psychology, including its ‘ accès de delicatesse étranges ’, mentions the incident which is the climax of this narrative—that of the two ‘ killers ’ who had charge of de Moleville getting the idea that he was innocent, and successfully defending him before the other *Septembriseurs*, and while still covered with blood, insisting on accompanying him home in order that they might witness the joy of his family. This is the story in de Moleville’s own words :

‘My brother the Chevalier had the good fortune to meet with two men, who although covered with blood which they themselves had shed, were nevertheless susceptible to the sentiments of humanity. As those men were the instruments of saving my brother’s life, I can never think of them without gratitude.

‘The tribunal established in the prison (Abbaye) for the pretended trial of the prisoners had delivered to the executioner all who had been brought before it. When my brother was summoned, one of those who were conducting him, struck with the calmness and air of security he remarked in his countenance, after having looked at him some moments with earnestness, said :

“ You have the appearance of an honest man, one conscious of guilt has not such a countenance.”

“ Well, I am conscious of no guilt.”

“ Why are you here, then ? ”

“ That is what I cannot tell. Nobody has been able to inform me. I am convinced I was taken up by mistake.”

“ You are sure of that ? ”

“ Very sure.”

“ In that case fear nothing. Keep a good heart. Speak firm before the judge, and rely on my support. Do you hear ? We shall bring you off, as sure as my name is Michel.”

“ I am not at all afraid, but I can assure you that you will be well rewarded.”

“ Don’t talk of that,” replied he with a shake of his head.

‘This unexpected good fortune of finding a zealous protector among the assassins imparted to my brother all the steadiness requisite to support the horrible aspect of his judges. Having arrived at the bar of this Tribunal of Blood and being interrogated by one of the butchers who presided as to his name and quality he mentioned his name, adding he was a " Malthais ".

" Malthais, Malthais, what does that mean, what is a Malthais ? " exclaimed a hundred voices at once.

" He means that he is from Malta," answered my brother's conductor, in a loud voice. " Malta is an island, don't you know that ? I have known a great many people who came from it and all of them were Malthais."

" Ah, it is an island," said one. " The prisoner is then a stranger ? "

" Yes, to be sure he is a stranger. What else can he be, you blockhead ? "

" Very well, but don't you get in a passion, Citoyen ! "

" Call to order, call to order, President," cried out several at once. " Come, let us make haste."

' On the President asking what he was accused of, he said he did not know, for nobody had been able to tell him.

" He lies, he lies," echoed from all sides.

" Silence, citizens ! " answered honest Michel, in a voice of authority, " let the prisoner speak. If he lies, his business will soon be done for him : but you won't condemn him without hearing him, I hope ? "

" No, no, no, that is but fair. Let us hear what he has to say for himself. Michel is in the right. Hear him, hear him. Go on, President."

" Why were you arrested ? " resumed the President.

" Because I had the misfortune to call upon a person the very moment the guard came to arrest him. They took me (and another who had also called by accident), along with him to the Municipality : but the other being a Commissary of the section, obtained his liberty in a few hours. My friends have also taken steps to procure mine, and they have also been told that orders would be immediately given for that purpose. I cannot conceive why they have not."

" But are you certain," said the President, " that there is no accusation against you on the register ? "

" I have no reason to think there is : but if there be, I shall not be at a loss to justify myself."

" Bring me the register," said the President. It was delivered to him by the gaoler, and upon examining it, the President, finding no crime annexed to the name of my brother, nor any reason whatever given for his being arrested, he handed the register to the other members of the tribunal, in order to convince them, and then declared, with a loud voice, that the prisoner had told the truth.

"The nation ought then to declare him innocent," cried Michel.

'The motion was supported by a general "Oui, oui, oui, oui." This unanimous declaration was immediately followed by a formal declaration of the tribunal, in the name of the nation, that the prisoner was innocent, and he was ordered to be set at liberty.

'This sentence was applauded by repeated cries of "Vive la Nation!" Upon this, Michel, and one of his comrades, who had seemed equally interested in my brother's fate, took him under the arm, and conducted him to the outer gate of the prison, where the massacres were committed, and loudly proclaimed him innocent.

'The executioners were drawn up in two different rows, their weapons ready to strike, when the words, "citoyen innocent" reached their ears. They instantly surrounded him, lifted him in their arms with clamorous transports of joy; and with faces and hands besmeared with blood they hugged him by turns. He was forced to submit, with a good grace, to these horrible caresses which his vigorous conductors with difficulty relieved him from, saying that he was unwell, required rest, and that it would be cruel to detain him longer. After having disengaged him from the mob, Michel asked him if he had any relations in town, to whom he wished to be conducted. He answered, that he had a sister-in-law, to whose house he was going, but that he would not give them the trouble of accompanying him, as he had sufficient strength still to walk by himself. He at the same time expressed his gratitude for their services, and offered them a handful of assignats as a small recompense for all they had done for him. They refused his money, and persisted in accompanying him.

"We must answer for you," said one of them to him, "and we cannot leave you till we have seen you in safety. As for your assignats, we will have none of them. The satisfaction of saving you is better than that. It is to your sister-in-law's, then, we are going? Where does she live?"

"In the rue du Chaume."

"The good lady will be surprised and happy, no doubt, to see you again."

"Oh! certainly she will be delighted."

"You would never guess, sir," said honest Michel, "what my comrades and I have been whispering together. We were just saying, that if you would give us leave to attend you to your sister's, it would do both our hearts good to see so happy a meeting."

"You are very kind, my friends, but it is late, and you stand in need of sleep."

"Oh, sir, that sight would refresh us more than anything."

"I should be glad of your company, but my sister-in-law is so timid, and of such a delicate constitution, that the sight of strangers, at so late an hour, might alarm her; and besides, the blood on your clothes might do her harm, which would certainly give you pain."

"Certainly," replied they, "but when you tell her that it was we who saved your life, she will be glad to see us. Depend upon it we will not frighten her. Come, come, sir, give us this satisfaction, it will not cost you so much as the money you offered, and will afford us much pleasure."

'My brother was forced to yield to their entreaties. They accompanied him to the house of my father-in-law, to which Madame Bertrand and my children had gone after the tenth of August. The joy of my family on seeing the Chevalier was the more lively, as they had given him up for lost.

'Madame Bertrand being prepared for the strange visit she was to receive, she consented to it without repugnance. Her heart was too full of joy and gratitude to be accessible to other sentiments. She only saw in these men, covered with blood, the deliverers of my brother, and she received them as her benefactors. They were extremely touched by this reception, and the joy of Madame Bertrand and her family, who surrounded the Chevalier, and embraced him with many tears.

'Michel and his friend were delighted with this scene of happiness, which they justly considered as their own work.

"It is you and I, my friend, after all," said Michel to his comrade, "who have saved the life of this honest man."

'To this the other assented, the tears, at the same instant, falling from the eyes of both. This emotion was undoubtedly mixed with remorse, for a moment when mild humanity began to resume her influence in the breasts of those men, perhaps originally good, but perverted by fanaticism and example, they could not but reflect with horror on the bloody scenes to which they had been accessory.

'They had the discretion not to prolong their visit beyond a quarter of an hour, and in taking leave of my brother, they repeatedly thanked him for the pleasure he had procured them.

'The reader must be struck with such an astonishing instance of sentiments so opposite and discordant existing in the same breast. How can we account for a fact so very extraordinary, that those who are employed as the assassins of their fellow-creatures, should, almost in the same moment, show themselves sensible of the most pleasing sensations of benevolence and compassion to a man quite unknown to them? Even those who have most deeply examined the human heart must be perplexed to give a satisfactory explanation of this phenomenon, which is, perhaps, without example.'

Le Loi Spoliateur

In this month the Assembly, before it dissolved and was replaced by the Convention, came to a final decision concerning the position of the Order of Malta in France. It passed on 19 September an elaborate decree of fourteen articles, introduced by Deputy Vincent of the Marne, by which the possessions of the Order of Malta held in France were to be considered national property and disposed of accordingly.

A suitable pension would be given to Priors, Baillis, Commanders, servants-at-arms, chaplains, and tenants, from the public treasury, provided they were not émigrés and undertook to remain in France.

The wearing of the decoration of the Order was prohibited in France.

The executive were to take prompt and active measures for the preservation of the titles, papers, and documents relating to possessions held by the Order in France.

One personal touch alone appears in this decree. Article XII decides that the Huissier of the Grand Priory of France, le Sieur Huchet, shall enjoy a pension of 720 livres. A story must surely lie behind this specific allusion to so minor a functionary in an important enactment of the Assembly.

The *décret spoliateur* had come at last!

The Convention

The Convention completed the break-up of the Order by a further decree of 22 October. In this the Minister of the

Interior was authorized to sell without delay the movable property in the houses of the Order of Malta, as in other religious houses and in the houses of émigrés.

Thus, amongst other things, valuable books, ornaments, plate, pictures passed from churches of the Order and Commanderies to new hands, breaking in the transfer priceless traditions and irreparable associations.

The Convention could act swiftly. An article of this decree ordered that the 'Seals be placed to-day in Paris' . . . on all the houses of the 'Receveur du comun Tresor' and of all other custodians, archivists, receveurs, or accountants, and also of their 'fermiers' (i.e. those to whom revenues had been assigned), with solemnity by a member of the Directory of the Department and in the country.

The personal belongings of the Knights were exempt from seizure if their owners could produce a certificate of residence in France in the form required by Republican law and show that they had never emigrated.

Amongst the protests against this 'loi spoliateur' of 19 September was one issued by the Chevalier d'Hannonville, in the following terms:

> '*Nancy, le* 31 *decembre* 1792.
>
> 'Citizens, you are just since you are the representatives of the Nation, you are the upholders of the law, you interpret it, you will not suffer it be violated, you will give justice to those citizens belonging to a Sovereign Foreign Order, who have been deprived of their goods, notwithstanding the bonds which link them to France, and the good faith with which Malta has always acted towards this Nation.
>
> The decree of September 19 has put the possessions of Malta into the hands of the French Nation, but it was surely never intended to be retrospective. Our revenues of the present year have been seized, and this is what has happened in nearly all the departments. Now the Receivers of national possessions claim to be entitled to hold what is due so legitimately to us up to the moment when the decree was pronounced against our property.
>
> Citizens, it is to your justice I appeal that we may keep the revenues and pensions we have, until such time that the law pronounces that we be deprived of them.
>
> Signed : d'Hannonville, Procureur Général de
> l'Ordre Souverain de Malte.'

The shadow of an accommodation, however, was still left, due no doubt to the persistent representations so loyally made to the various Governments since 1789 by de Virieu, d'Estourmel, de Foresta, even by the tactless de La Brillane, and by a host of others in the cause of peace with honour.

The articles of the decree, which suppressed the Order in France, allowed an arrangement to be made between the Republic and the Order for the maintenance of the hospital and the Port of Valletta, on an international basis, but the parties concerned had not vision enough at the time to undertake a scheme of such mutual advantage.

CHAPTER X

CIBON: A SOI-DISANT CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES

A soi-disant Chargé d'Affaires—The Rule will not allow

WITH the departure of de Virieu and the disappearance of d'Estourmel, in the month of September 1792, there remained in Paris no accredited representative of the Order of Malta to the French Government.

A Soi-disant Chargé d'Affaires

In this dubious state of affairs, Cibon, the clerk of the Embassy whom we have already mentioned, decided on his initiative to assume the title of 'chargé d'affaires de Malte', and entered himself as such in the 'Almanach National'. The son of a former clerk, who had served in the good old days of the Bailli de Suffren, his devotion to the Order in these troubled times was truly remarkable. At the risk of any fate he undertook a weekly correspondence with the Grand Master, using a cipher which Doublet had already sent him.

It was Cibon who, in a letter from Paris, first gave Malta the news of the decree of confiscation. As an article in this decree stated that there would be an arrangement made with the Order by which the French maritime trade might enjoy the advantages of the Port of Malta and also its Hospital, there was left an open door for negotiation between the two Governments. This, no doubt, stimulated M. Cibon to continue his correspondence with Malta.

As the year 1792 drew to a close he did not, however, disguise the fact that it was impossible for him to do anything with a Republican Government which, as yet, no foreign Government had recognized.

'But,' he writes, 'we should certainly at this crisis have at Paris someone to watch events and report to Malta.' He hopes his zeal and devotion to the Order in so critical a moment, when all other agents had fled, would merit him the confidence of the Grand Master and a suitable title to allow him to act somehow. This would all be in the interests of the Order, many of whom were the victims of persecution at the hands of their enemies in the Directory, and some of whom he had actually been able to liberate from prison.

While he was waiting for the reply to this suggestion, we can imagine him—this brave young man—of bourgeois mien and quietly dressed, sitting silently in some café, reading the papers or listening to opinions. He would be watching events, filled with the importance of his position and its potentialities, yet fearing to disclose to his curious companions, save, perhaps, by hints and half-spoken suggestions, the vast interests he was handling, and his hopes of office in the *corps diplomatique* with a cross and ribbon . . . who knows, some day, a Commandery of his own?

The Rule will not allow

At Malta these offers of service, to which due attention and encouragement should have been given, were coldly received, not merely on the grounds of general sentiment against the Republic, but because of the inveterate adherence to ancient traditions, as first the rule which precluded a person of such bourgeois origin as Cibon's ever being accepted as a full Knight, and then the rule which forbade any mission of the Order to a foreign Court being executed by any person save a fully professed Knight of the Order.

The Grand Master did not consider it suitable even to refer the proposal to the French Committee, nor even to reply to it himself. He could not, he said to Doublet, take upon himself the responsibility of giving confidence and credit to a man so little known, who had not even been received into the Order. Temporizing with himself in a difficult situation, de Rohan said that his honour, self-respect, and profound sentiment of horror against the persecutors of the Royal Family prevented his having any relations with so odious and deplorable a Government: and it was decided not to write to France before the King was set at liberty and established on the throne and the decree of spoliation revoked.

'And what,' asks Doublet with larger vision, 'is to become in the interval of the large sums of money in the offices of the Receivers at Paris, Toulouse, Lyons, and Marseilles, and of the Archives in the Grand Priories, and in the Embassy? The decree has been put into operation . . . effects and valuables have been removed from commanderies, churches, and convents . . . they have been ravaged without even a protest. And the safety and protection of the members of the Order and their faithful servants, exposed in consequence to all sorts of insults and disasters in this terrible moment—will all these be abandoned? . . . total inaction or absolute silence is not the safe line to take.'

After a long harangue upon these lines from his Secretary, the Grand Master agreed to a compromise. Doublet was directed to tell Cibon to remain in Paris and to do his best there for the Order in general and for its members in particular, and that in due time and place he would be recompensed.

'Does Your Eminence consent,' asked Doublet, 'that I should also inform him of the remarks you have made to me concerning the representation?'

'Yes, there is no harm in that. But caution him not to hazard too much and to be careful of his own safety. We shall see then upon whom we will decide to represent us, because it is one of our maxims only to authorize a professed member of our Order to speak and act officially in its name.'

To the 'soi-disant chargé d'affaires', in whom, no doubt, personal ambition was growing equally with anxiety for the interests of the Order, Doublet wrote in cipher these crumbs of comfort, asking him to reply with the same caution and in duplicate, one letter via Marseilles and the other via Italy, as was usual in such times of danger. Cibon was so to frame his letters to Doublet that if he was asked by the Grand Master to read them aloud—as His Eminence had already asked him to do—their contents were to be quite clear.

This was not in the least to prevent Cibon from stating all the unpleasant facts which he thought might be useful for them to know in Malta, consistently, of course, with expressing a due respect for the Prince. . . . Cibon was to tell the names of those with whom he was in touch and who might be of help to the Order. Also, he was to keep them informed of the fate of d'Estourmel, of the treasure, of the Archives of the Order and of their churches in Paris.

Doublet knew his man. Cibon rose to the occasion. In this way the Grand Master was kept informed for the next four years of the course of events in Paris by letters in cipher sent by Cibon—sometimes twice a week.

CHAPTER XI

REACTIONS IN MALTA TO THE REVOLUTION

De Rohan's Dilemma—The Grand Master's Letter Bag—The Journeys of de Foresta—News of the Execution of the King—Manifesto of the Grand Master—The French Consulate in Malta—A French Foothold in Malta, 1793*—De Foresta Arraigned: The Ruse of the Grand Master—England is Watching—The English Consul*

DOUBLET, when not deciphering Cibon's weekly letters, was trying to keep the Grand Master and the Sacred Council on the path of prudence in relation to the Republic.

With the opening of 1793 the pressing problem was: should the Order be represented at Paris? The Grand Master found himself in great perplexity. If he sent a representative, he acknowledged the Republic, which the foreign Powers, protectors of the Order, had not done. On the contrary, they were seeking to invade France, destroy the Republic and restore the King. If the Republic went under and he had recognized it, what would the foreign Powers say to him when they entered Paris victoriously? And if the Republic won and the Order had not recognized it, the Grand Master could not then go and ask for restitution and compensation.

Cibon had shrewdly asked what was to become of the property of the Order in the meantime—such of it as might be saved from the wreck?

To assist the Grand Master in this dilemma the industrious Doublet drew up a 'mémoire secret pour S. A. S. Monseigneur le Grand-Maître, seul, sur la nécessité d'observer la neutralité, redigé en novembre 1792'.

His Highness the Grand Master had—this memoir stated—wisely considered that to declare war on France would be with their small fleet 'la lutte du pot de terre contre le pot de fer'. To do so would also be to show ingratitude to their many friends in the Chambers of Commerce of various French towns and to injure other French interests which were equally their own.

The Revolution would some day stop. The new Government would surely see the injustice of having taken the property of the Order. They would recognize the value to French trade of the shelter which it enjoyed in their little Island, and the protection afforded by the perpetual war which the Order waged with the 'Régences barbaresques'.

Historical precedents were against any hot-headed action. When the Order, by change of religion, lost its estates in Bohemia, Hungary, Prussia, Poland, Holland, Germany, and above all in England—it never declared war. The pretended schism in religion in France is no more an argument for war than was the change of religion in those other countries.

With political prescience, Doublet concluded, 'Beware of any active and open preparations for war: there are other maritime nations who would like to seize Malta. If you come openly into war against France, you may invite them to seize you on some pretext or other!'

Already nearly a month had passed after the news of the decree of confiscation had reached Malta, yet the heads of the Order there had seemingly no settled policy in relation to the new Republic.

The Grand Master's Letter Bag

The situation within the Order itself had become kaleidoscopic. Letters reached Malta from numerous Knights scattered over Europe, most of them competent and trusted agents of the Order, with suggestions and reflections upon the ever-changing state of Europe.

The difficulty of the Grand Master in coming to any definite decision as to the policy of the Order can best be appreciated by a glance at this correspondence which filled his letter-bags to embarrass him with a multiplicity of counsels.

From Rome the Bailli de Loras, influenced by the émigrés there, the distress of Cardinal de Bernis, the menace to the Papal states by a French army, counselled war.

In Switzerland a certain Commander de Maisonneuve, high in the Grand Master's favour, appears upon the political horizon counselling diplomacy. At this juncture the Commander was, in fact, taking a holiday in Basle, having successfully conducted a mission concerning the payments due to the Order from the Receiver in Vienna. His own duties were those of a gentleman of the household of the King of Poland, Stanislas Poniatowski.

When in Switzerland, the Commander de Maisonneuve met the British Minister there, Lord Robert Fitzgerald, and suggested secretly to him the possibility of a subsidy from England to the Grand Master, if the Order joined the Coalition. This proposal was rejected by the Grand Master, despite the allurement of replenishing a diminished Treasury, and de Maisonneuve was forbidden to have further dealings with the British Minister.

The Commander then changed his plans and his opinions and sought to have himself accepted by the Directory in Paris as Minister of the Order; and to advance his idea, he presented himself to the Ambassador of France at Berne. This happened to be the famous M. Barthelemy who, as far back as the year 1774, as simple chargé d'affaires of France in Vienna in the happy days of the Cardinal de Rohan and the Queen Mother, had rendered some considerable service to the Grand Master Ximenes. The Ambassador was still willing to help the Order and wrote accordingly to the Directory in Paris to ascertain if the proposed appointment of de Maisonneuve would be acceptable. But he received no reply.

De Maisonneuve at the same time asked the Grand Master to accredit him to Paris.

Now de Maisonneuve had been, as a matter of fact, placed on the fatal list of émigrés in France. Knowing this, he wrote a letter in cipher to the clerk Cibon, sending the key in another letter carried by a trusty hand, asking him to help him by having his name removed from the list.

Cibon was considerably perturbed by this mark of confidence and refused to move in so dangerous a matter with the Directory, and left de Maisonneuve's letter unanswered. He also resented being supplanted by a stranger from afar, and boldly told the Grand Master so.

The Grand Master, to disappoint no one, says Doublet, 'approved the zeal of Cibon, but let him know that he would never give him the title of Minister which he, Cibon, longed for so dearly'.

The Journeys of de Foresta

At this same time the Bailli de Foresta writes that 'they know nothing of the decree of spoliation in Marseilles save the notice in the *Gazettes*'—for the new Convention was too busy with the trial of the unfortunate King and the threatened invasion of France to put it into execution. He had heard nothing, owing to the interruptions of the posts with Paris, of Cibon's action in appointing himself chargé d'affaires, and he asked the Grand Master what he could do to help in the dubious situation. At the same time he reported to Malta the various steps he had taken to place in safe hiding the effects and the Archives of the Order that were in his keeping, for fear of attack by the Municipality under the new law.

As regards the funds—considerable money having amassed in his safe—he was able to transport them across the frontier to Genoa, where they were placed to the account of the Receiver of the Order in that Republic, the Chevalier Lomellini. Thus 156,000 francs were saved.

This news, which pleased the Treasury, rather stultified the members of the French Committee, who had been precipitate enough to blame de Foresta for taking the post of Commandant of the National Guard at Marseilles, in an earlier year, and for otherwise supporting the new régime. They now saw that his prudence was bearing fruit.

It therefore was suggested by the Bailli de Pennes of the French Committee, and agreed to by his colleagues, to send de Foresta without delay to Paris as an envoy extraordinary to protest against the confiscation of their property and to come to an accommodation with the Republic.

Instructions under seven heads were drawn up and sent to de Foresta. They are interesting, in particular, for the offer made in them to the Directory to modify the ancient laws of the Order in their requirements of nobility in persons seeking admission into the French Langues.

The Committee was willing to admit ‘ without any proofs, distinction or profession ’—it would seem they were willing even to waive the religious ceremony—any persons whom the French Government might approve who had served with renown in the Army or the Navy. The only condition they would impose was the vow of celibacy.

Counter proposals were made to the Directory to compensate the Order for the loss of their property. De Foresta was to impress upon the French Government that the Sacred Council had only protested when every practical means of persuasion and conciliation had been exhausted.

The Bailli de Foresta immediately accepted this delicate mission. Hazarding all dangers and difficulties he set out from Marseilles on January 18, 1793, for Paris. Here he arrived just after the unhappy execution of the King. He conferred with Cibon, to whom he explained his mission. It would appear that he also met d'Estourmel secretly. Cibon dissuaded him from presenting himself to the Directory and urged him, for safety, to return to Marseilles. This was at the moment, writes Doublet, a wise counsel, for the French Committee in Malta ‘ would never have sent an Envoy extraordinary to confer with the executioners of their Monarch, had they foreseen the blood-stained catastrophe ’.

To get back to Marseilles was another matter. It was necessary to get a passport to leave Paris. De Foresta, in going to the Committee who issued them, fell in with some merchants from Marseilles whom he already knew. They told him that they had been commissioned by the Republic to procure supplies of wheat, and they asked the Bailli if it would not be possible to obtain facilities from the Grand Master to establish a depôt at Malta for the purpose.

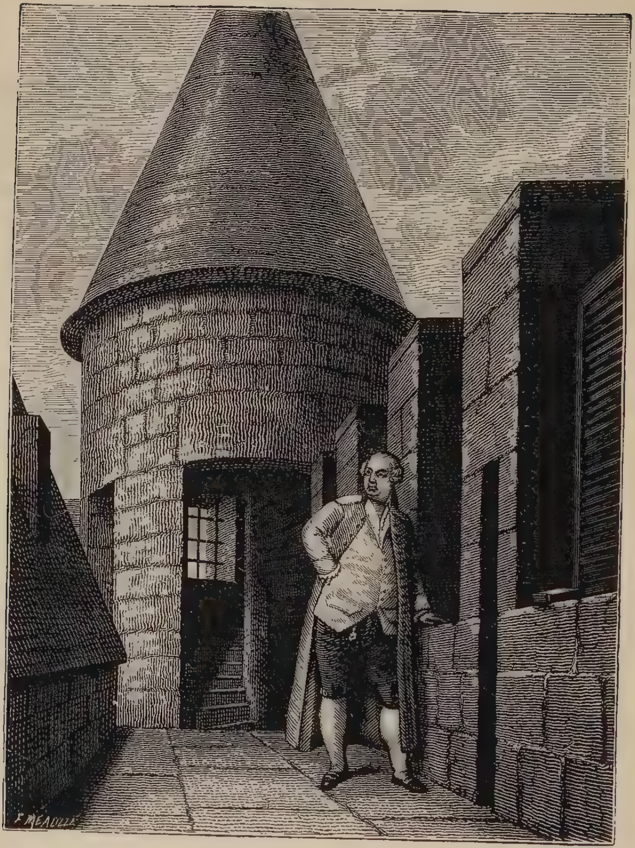
De Foresta took them into his confidence. He told them of his fruitless mission to Paris and feared that the Grand Master, angered at the unjust decree of confiscation and at the murder of the King, would not assent to their suggestion.

De Foresta, ultimately obtaining his passport, departed from Paris. Arriving at Lyons, which had been declared by the Convention a Royalist centre, he fell ill. The very next day the town was besieged by the Republican troops and bombarded. He was unable to get out of it. At length, after a valiant defence, the Lyonnais were forced to surrender. The Bailli de Foresta had the good fortune to escape with the brave de Précy, the Royalist Commandant, who was his friend.

At length he reached his house in Marseilles. He found it had been occupied in his absence as a guard-house by the Republican troops. It was night, and too late to get into touch with the authorities. He was exhausted with his journey and, finding a corner in his own house in which to rest, he fell asleep.

Soon, however, he was awakened and dragged off to prison. He asked why. They told him that his name had been placed, in his absence, on the list of émigrés, and that he must come along.

The next day he showed to the authorities that he went to Paris with a passport, that he had come back to Marseilles with one, that he was not an émigré. They pointed out that his passport from Paris was six weeks old, that the journey from Paris should have taken, at most, eight days; this proved that he had stopped somewhere else in France or had crossed the frontier. He explained that he had fallen ill at Lyons, and



THE PRISONER OF THE TEMPLE

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had had to stay there during the whole of the siege. 'Why, then,' they asked, 'does your passport not mention this?' 'Because in avoiding the "mitrailles" I had the good fortune to escape with de Précy.' 'Then, like him, you are an enemy of the Republic; so you will remain in prison.'

In vain did the friends of the Bailli, the Consul La Font and others, produce proof that he had not quitted French soil. They were not listened to.

News of the Execution of the King, 1793

The execution of the King on 21 January, 1793, made the counsels of neutrality more difficult for the Grand Master to follow. When the news first reached Malta we do not know, but it came before the Sacred Council only in a letter of 17 February, from the Bailli Franconi at Naples in these terms:

> 'A. E.
>
> 'Friday a Swedish boat ready to sail. . . . I take the opportunity to announce to V. A. E. the desolating news of the death of the unfortunate Louis XVI as you may deign to read more in detail in the attached account. My sorrow at this is more than I can express and I acquaint V. A. of the atrocious news with the greatest emotion and bitterness of soul.'

This letter was brought before the Sacred Council on the 25th of the month.

They ordered 'the obsequies usual on the death of a brother Sovereign to be performed in S. John's': no other observation—wisely, and perhaps by design—is recorded in the minutes. This act of respect for the deceased Monarch, however, irritated the Directory in Paris, and was used against the Order later on by Bonaparte.

Unfortunately in the letter-book in which the original letter is kept, the 'attached account' of the King's death is not to be found. It may yet be traced in the Archives and prove of some interest.

Manifesto of the Grand Master

In the month of March the Directory at Paris sent a person called Eimar to represent the Republic at Malta, in place of the Chevalier Seytres-Caumont. The Grand Master refused to receive him, requesting the latter to continue to act for France.

Later, in October, the whole matter was explained to the world in a manifesto in the following terms:

'The Court of Naples having notified to the Grand Master of the Sovereign Order of Malta, that, being resolved to have no connection with the French Government, it had sent away all those agents who had till then resided near his Sicilian Majesty, or in any of his ports; His Most Eminent Highness eagerly embraced this opportunity of shutting the port of Malta against all ships of war. By this authentic act, the Grand Master meant to declare that he would not maintain any connection with France since the dreadful troubles which had taken place in the kingdom, and which had deprived it of a Sovereign universally regretted.

The law of nations being in all respects violated in France, and particularly in everything relative to the Order of Malta, those who were not perfectly well acquainted with the fundamental laws of the Order were induced to believe that the Grand Master ought to have made reprisals at an earlier period; but the above-mentioned law compelled him to remain neutral: besides, the Grand Master did not wish to place himself in a situation which would oblige him to acknowledge the pretended French Republic. To avoid this inconvenience, His Most Eminent Highness had given orders, on 15 March, to the Chevalier Seytres-Caumont, residing at Malta as chargé d'affaires from Louis XVI of glorious memory, to continue as before to act for the affairs of France.[1] In consequence of which, THE SAID CHEVALIER WAS ALWAYS ACKNOWLEDGED AS CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES FROM FRANCE TO MALTA; and he still exercised the same functions, under the protection of the Grand Master. Things being in this situation, His Most Eminent Highness was not a little surprised to learn, by indirect means, that a person named Eimar was appointed to succeed the Chevalier Seytres-Caumont, and that he was actually on his road to Malta. His Most Eminent Highness therefore, declared, THAT HE WOULD NOT RECEIVE OR ADMIT INTO HIS DOMINIONS THE SAID PERSON, nor, indeed any other that should be sent to reside in Malta as agent of the pretended French Republic; which the Grand Master ought not, could not, and would not, acknowledge.'

From this Manifesto it will be seen that the Grand Master was careful not to declare ' war ' upon France, but to keep to ' neutrality ', refusing, as the Order might legally do, admission to ships of war of all belligerents, save in limited numbers for the purpose of drawing water. The ships of the French Mercantile Marine, therefore, were allowed to enter the port, but were sometimes required to lower the tricolour on entry. This was explained as an order given to prevent these colours being treated with violence. Sometimes they were told to go. ' Here they have sent away,' writes the British Consul to his Minister at Whitehall in the March of this year, ' all the French vessels that were here for their bad behaviour, not being able to put up with them, because their insolence is too great to be suffered by anybody.'

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[1] According to the title he had received from the late King, and as such to continue to have the arms of France over his door.—BOISGELIN.

The French Consulate in Malta

The French Consulate at Malta was naturally a storm-centre in these years of revolution. The Chevalier Seytres-Caumont mentioned in the above manifesto had been in office, as Minister of the King of France at the Court of the Grand Master, since the year 1778. His office had been no sinecure in view of the increasing power of the French fleet in the Mediterranean and the extension of the French trade in the Near East. He had to deal with a multitude of social, political and economic matters in the interests of France. The Register of his letters shows a constant correspondence in the years 1778–1794 with the Minister for Foreign Affairs at Versailles, his official chief; with the French Ambassadors at Rome, Naples and Constantinople; with French Ministers or Consular Agents at Genoa, Tripoli, Tunis, and Algiers.

Two, at least, of his correspondents have an interest for our story—Cardinal Bernis, French Ambassador to the Pope at Rome, adviser to Louis XVI in his soul-racking problem of the acceptance or rejection of the civil constitution of the clergy, and the Chargé d'Affaires of France at the Court of Naples, where was an Austrian Queen, sister of Marie Antoinette. What reports and documents must have been exchanged!

Many original papers corresponding to the Register of Letters of the Chevalier Seytres-Caumont and his predecessors —for the Register reaches back to the year 1672—are stored to-day in the French Consulate in Sda. Forni in Valletta, as yet unedited.

Now the Chevalier Seytres-Caumont had in his office, as *chancelier*, a Mons. Caruson. This Caruson, seemingly a good Republican, was appointed in 1795 by the Directory in Paris as Minister of the Republic at Malta, superseding his former chief. He was not recognized by the Order. He was not, however, obnoxious to the Grand Master though he wore the tricolour and his late chief the fleur-de-lys, for he was allowed to remain in the Island. He had to content himself with helping those French subjects and Maltese people that might seek his services. He was thrown in consequence into the hands of the extremists in Malta.

Amongst his friends, it is said, was one Poussielgue, the captain of the port of Malta, an official in the employ of the Order . . . and a kinsman of the other Poussielgue who was to come, as a spy of the Directory, to Malta, and to return later as one of General Bonaparte's confidential secretaries.

A French Foothold in Malta, 1793

We have seen that in the January of this year de Foresta had fallen in with some merchants of Paris, who were also municipal officers, engaged in obtaining wheat supplies from overseas.

Malta had long been known as a place where, from the curious facilities of the rock, grain could safely be stored underground, and the arrangements of the Order for a large and permanent supply, in case of a siege, were celebrated in travellers' tales. It was also a useful place from which to buy grain coming from the littoral of the Mediterranean or from the Black Sea.

The Directory at this time, in 1793, were much concerned about supplies for the Army and Navy and, with the incursion of their forces into Italy, were beginning to think of foreign conquests. The idea of Malta, as a port under French control, may have already formed itself in their minds, and perhaps they thought that, having extended French influence through a trade centre in Malta, they could seize the Island later.

These merchants, then, are instructed by the Directory, to approach the Grand Master of Malta with a view to establishing a French Commercial Depot in that Island. They write to the Grand Master and arrange to start upon their journey. They are, however, persuaded that if de Foresta did not go with them they will not succeed in their undertaking. They write to him from Paris and find, alas, that he is in prison in Marseilles.

They go to their friends in the Government and, a few days after, an order from the Committee of Public Safety comes to the Municipality of Marseilles to take de Foresta out of prison and escort him back to Paris. This is done, and the authorities there inform him that he is free, on condition that he accompanies the party of merchants proceeding to Malta. He is promised ' mountains and marvels ' in the interests of the Order if he is able to secure the consent of the Grand Master to the proposed scheme.

Having no option but to agree, de Foresta, with sinister presentiments, leaves Paris on his mission.

Robespierre is now reaching the height of his power.

It appears that in the January of 1793, Robespierre had seen de Foresta in Paris and had taken a violent dislike to him. It also happened that the mission had been undertaken without the details coming to his knowledge. His spies informed him that de Foresta was to be of the party, and that it now reached six persons in all, including some merchants who also had incurred his enmity. Actually these persons were not interested in the scheme at all, but were seeking to escape with their securities from France under cover of a patriotic undertaking.

When Robespierre learns these facts, the party have already left Paris and are crossing the frontier into Genoa. Robespierre, through the Committee of Public Safety, at once orders the arrest of all of them, and writes to the ' representatives of the people in mission with the army in Italy ', who were Saliceti, Ricard, and Robespierre's own brother, Augustin, directing them to arrange with the French Consul in Genoa, M. Tilly, for their seizure.

This triumvirate accordingly order M. Tilly to deliver into their hands the party, described in the report as ' les citoyens Foresta, ci-devant grand bailli de l'Ordre de Malte, Figuet et Mennessier, officiers municipaux de Paris, Flachet et un cinquième ', with their papers and effects.

This is done. The representatives are ordered by a further letter from the Committee of Public Safety to transfer these individuals to Marseilles, whence they are to be sent to Paris.

' The orders of Robespierre,' wrote Doublet, ' were so sweeping, precise, and absolute, that they were actually put into execution in foreign territory, against all the laws of nations at the time, through the weakness of the Government of the Republic of Genoa and to its shame.'

But fortune favoured the brave Bailli de Foresta. The Order of Malta was represented at Genoa by its Receiver, the

Chevalier Lomellini, who approached the French Consul Tilly, protested in the name of his Order, and persuaded him to obtain powers to allow de Foresta to remain under arrest in Genoa.

De Foresta Arraigned: the Ruse of the Grand Master

The news of this mission of de Foresta was received with hostility by the counter-revolutionaries at Malta. A party of them got together and set the ancient but effective machinery of the laws of the Order in motion against him. The Advocat Fiscal obtains an order from the Sacred Council, citing him 'criminalmente in convento'. De Foresta is ordered to appear before them on the grounds of treason against the Order.

The Grand Master is in a difficulty. He cannot openly prevent the law from taking its course. He cannot induce the Sacred Council to withdraw its order. He has recourse to an intrigue. Officially he issues the order to the Agent at Genoa, the Chevalier Lomellini, to serve notice upon de Foresta to appear in Malta before the authorities of the Order on this grave charge and to arrange with the French Minister there for his extradition.

At the same time he writes privately to the Chevalier Lomellini to induce the French Minister and the Government of Genoa to refuse to allow the extradition, on the grounds of their common interest in an accommodation with France. De Rohan also orders the authorities in Malta to take the person of de Foresta, if he was deported from Genoa, and imprison him in Fort S. Elmo under double locks—to keep him in safety from the younger Knights of the Order who loudly called that he should be thrown into the harbour in a sack.

The ruse succeeded. De Foresta was not allowed to go to Malta but was kept in Genoa until Robespierre fell on the famous 10th Thermidor, 1794.

M. Tilly was then replaced, as Consul of the Republic, by M. Villars, who was favourably disposed to the Order and allowed de Foresta to remain under open arrest, with all the city of Genoa as his prison. In Genoa, then, we must leave the indomitable Bailli for some months with ample leisure to meditate upon his recent tribulations and the future of the Order which he had so much at heart.

* * *

It was openly spoken of at Malta, both by the Knights and the people, that several Great Powers were covetous of the control of the Island for their own ends. Doublet had recorded this in his memoir upon neutrality in 1789, already quoted. Foreign spies and secret agents in the Islands reported every move to their respective Governments, and of the activities of these spies the Grand Master was probably informed by his own secret service.

England is Watching

England was watching the situation closely, as the following unsigned document, presented to the British Minister at Whitehall, will show:

'The following object is respectfully submitted for the consideration of Lord Grenville.

'The confiscation which has taken place in France of the Property of the Knights of Malta, will, it is believed, lay the Order under the necessity of negotiating with one or the other of the great Maritime Powers for Protection. This Protection will imply on the part of the Order the Sovereignty of the Island and the disposal of its land and sea forces. Should the French be the contracting party that Island will give them nearly the same command of the Trade to the Gulf of Venice, the Archipelago, Constantinople, Egypt, and other parts of the Levant, as the Danes have of the Baltic Trade by being in possession of Elsinore. Should the Russians gain possession of it, they will have it in their power to starve Constantinople and reduce the Greek Islands and, similar to the French, to dictate the terms of intercourse with the Levant.

'There belong to Malta three or four line of battleships, a staunch frigate, four galleys which have a crew of 700 men, the others 500, many Chebecs, Galliots, Corsairs usually carrying about 200 men: a regiment of infantry of about 1500 men, besides about 2000 destined for Military Service on board ship. Malta, exclusive of Gozo, can raise a militia of about 25,000 men. The impregnable strength of Valletta is well known, it contains an arsenal with arms for 35,000 men. To Spain the fate of Malta is more an object of indifference, as the trade of Spain in the Mediterranean is chiefly coasting, or at farthest to the western coast of Sicily and Italy. To Great Britain the possession of Malta would secure in time of peace every advantage of commercial intercourse with Italy, Sicily, the eastern half of the Mediterranean, Egypt, the coast of Africa. It would be a great warehouse for the commodities of England and by means of its lazarettos would enable the merchants to carry on without loss of time the Turkey trade. In time of war it would give the most effectual protection to our trading vessels and if attacked, it would occasion such a diversion of the force of our enemies as would of necessity weaken their efforts where we are more vulnerable.

'As to jealousy which might be excited against whatever Power might make this acquisition; there is reason to think that France would sooner submit to see it in possession of Great Britain than of Russia, and that Russia would give us the same sort of preference over France. Nor is there reason to doubt of Spain and the Italian States entertaining similar sentiments. The present is apprehended to be the proper time for such a negotiation, which from its importance will require dexterous management.

'There are persons in London,' concludes the report of this Agent, 'who, from their connections and rank in life, are equal to the business and who may be prevailed on to engage in it.'

The English Consul

The Consul for his Britannic Majesty at Malta was at this time a person appropriately called William England. He had, it seems, been born and bred in Bristol; was educated in a respectable school there, and had become a British sailor. He had the misfortune, however, to be taken as a prisoner by the Americans in the War of Independence. He was interned in Malta as a neutral port and on the suspension of hostilities had settled in business there.

Mr. England had been appointed in 1786, in the first instance, curious to say, not by his own King, but by the Grand Master of Malta, who in September 1788 wrote a patent for him in which he declared England to be Consul for the English Nation 'not being here any person that understood the English language, being dead the last consul Angelo Rutter'. After a long delay—for his many letters to Whitehall were overlooked—he was duly appointed by the British Government, but his patriotic services, and they were many, and his sufferings during the French invasion, were ill-rewarded by the Crown.

In the month of February 1793 England declared war against France and her Fleet joined the Allies in the Mediterranean. This declaration of war by England took some time to reach the British Consul officially, nor was the British Fleet to be seen at that moment. The French ships seem to have been the first to know of it. ‘One of these fellows,’ writes the British Consul, ‘told an English captain: “Do not fear if you fall prisoner, for we will treat you well, as all the low people in England are with us, and so we will get them to cut their King’s head off, as we have done to ours!”’

Thus did the French sailor dream of the extension of democracy.

CHAPTER XII

CONFUSION IN 'THE CONVENT'

The Émigrés come to Malta—Their Conduct—A Prodigy of Mohammed

REFUGEES from France had come in numbers to Malta, bringing, in their visible distress, evidence of the increasing evils of the Revolution. First came the older Knights and servants d'armes, too feeble to fight, and many chaplains of the Order. After the decree of the Assembly of September 1792 which made illegal the bearing of the title chevalier and the wearing of the ribbon of the Order, few Knights, except conscientious Republicans, could remain with honour in France. The younger Knights naturally joined, if they could escape from France, the armies of the Allies. French nobles, too, and their families, with sons, brothers, or friends in the Order, took ship from southern ports to this Island of refuge, and brought terrible tales of France in flames, of their people massacred, and of their châteaux and property destroyed. Many clergy and religious of the Church in France were naturally able to find asylum in the monasteries and convents of the various religious communities in Malta.

The Prior of the Temple Church in Paris was amongst them, Claude Ligny de Laquenoy. 'He thought it his duty,' wrote a contemporary, 'to refuse to take the *serment civique* and occasioned by his flight a scandal which the protest of his conscience alone excused.' Ligny de Laquenoy had commenced with the Comte de la Platière a work entitled 'Les Fastes de Malte' but the Revolution never allowed him to finish it. De Rohan appointed him Prior of the Hospital in Valletta.

In the train of the refugee Knights and the French nobles, came their dependents, persons of the learned professions, doctors, lawyers, artists, and dancing-masters, and their humble retainers, stewards, lackeys, and servants.

From Italy, too, where the armies of the Republic, as they advanced, dispossessed kingdoms and confiscated the property of the Order, came members of the Italian Langues, from Venice and Piedmont. Many Italian families sought flight from the ports of Genoa and Naples, and amongst these were bankers and merchants.

* * *

Strange adventures befell some of these on their way. Some never arrived. Such was the case of Chevalier d'Aubery du Maurier who tells his story in a series of letters to the Grand Master. He sought in May 1797 to reach Malta, via Rome, from Rimini, taking with him the year's revenue of a commandery due to the Treasury, for he was a Receiver. He armed himself with a *salvus-conductus* from a Papal Legate, the Cardinal Duguessi, but 'as the French Army has entered the Romagna on a war footing he fears to be taken for an émigré'. He leaves accordingly the high road and takes to the mountains in the Duchy of Urbino. Here he falls in with another wandering Knight, the Chevalier Renauld Merlin, and a Captain Paul Lansi who was also in the service of the Sacred Religion. They are attacked by mountaineers, imprisoned and robbed of all they possessed, and 'had they not escaped in the darkness of a rainy night, they would have died from the barbarous treatment being prepared for them'.

They were forced to give themselves up to the French and the Chevalier d'Aubery had the humiliation of continuing his journey to Malta under a passport issued by the Administration of the 'Republic of Emilia', on the application, in his behalf, of a French general of Division who vouched for his 'civism'. This Italian passport, following the French model, was issued in the name of *Libertà* and *Uguaglianza*, and conveyed *salute e fratellanza* to all whom it might concern.

It stated rather cynically, beneath an engraving of a classic figure wearing a cap of liberty and carrying an axe and fasces, that 'a popular insurrection occurring in the past months has fatally despoiled of all his possessions this Knight whose priceless virtues are well known in Rimini', and he was now described as the '*Cittadino Cav*^{re}*. d'Aubery*'.

* * *

The influx of refugees, avoiding the Terror in France, proved a great financial strain upon the Order at Malta.

The Order could not, naturally, refuse hospitality to their members. The refugees had little or no money and what they had was soon gone. They were maintained in consequence by the funds of the Treasury of the Order, and installed, as best could be arranged, in the various Auberges or other buildings in Valletta.

The Camerata, for instance, a large building in Strada Mercanti, designed originally as a residence for Knights when making a religious retreat, was converted into a hostel for the homeless.

The Grand Master gave an example by placing all his diminishing personal revenues at their disposal, reserving, it is said, only two shillings a day for his own meals.

Their Conduct

Doublet has shown an unpleasant side to this picture :

A great source of worry to de Rohan to the end, was the conduct of some of the émigrés who had found their way to Malta. There was more sense amongst the 'servants d'armes' and the priests of the Order than amongst the Knights themselves. Most of the Knights, proud of their titles of nobility, would never admit, even to one another, that they had been wrong in their political opinions, as counter-revolutionaries.

Often did they, in the course of the Revolution, compromise the dynasty of their Chief and the neutrality of their Order by insulting the French sailors in the streets of Valletta, even on the quays beside the decks of their ships, when they saw the tricolour flying, without thinking that it was flown by a law sanctioned by their King and without reflecting upon the consequences which would result when those who received the insults returned home to France.

The French Government often had to complain to the Grand Master, through the Chevalier Seytres-Caumont, even before the fall of the Monarchy. The Grand Master made suitable apologies, which were reported to the National Assembly, and he duly punished the offenders. This did not stop others from continuing their attacks. Complaints were raised by these sailors in their political clubs, on their return to Marseilles and Toulon, and the Agents of the Order in these places were subjected to very unpleasant treatment. Several relatives of these imprudent Knights were molested in the departments.

These 'die-hards' had a bad effect, too, on some of the young novices, left to the care of Conventual Chaplains or 'servants d'armes', who were entrusted by their parents to watch over their conduct and pay them the allowance from home. When the tutors sought to restrain these novices from joining their elder brethren, the young hot-heads ridiculed their good advice and with their turbulent friends broke the windows of the houses of the priests and 'servants d'armes' at night and called them 'sans-culottes', and 'carmagnoles'. Many were punished without effect.

Some of these young rowdies went off with great enthusiasm to Coblentz to join the army of Condé. Those of them who escaped death and returned at the general peace were in a considerably chastened mood, for their sufferings in the field had calmed their effervescence. Even then they could never forgive the small group of their brethren who, while detesting the horrors committed in the interior of France, were proud of the glorious victories of the French armies abroad. These, however high their positions at Malta, however great their age or their services, were covered with humiliations, insults, and outrages by the returned Royalist Knights.

The Grand Master tried in vain to repress, by disciplinary measures in their Langues, the venomous actions of these young men whose conduct scandalized the Knights of other Langues and also the educated Maltese.

* * *

The evident misfortunes of the émigrés, also, increased the desire of the extreme Royalists in the Sacred Council to take more violent measures against the Republic.

It was suggested that admission to the Hospital of the French sailors who fell ill should be refused, but the 'moderates' were able to prevent this negation of one of the first principles of the Order.

Three Knights, armed with official recommendations, had appeared in Malta from the Continent, the Chevalier de Corn, and the Commanders de Ferré and de Fargues, seeking to raise one infantry and two cavalry regiments for 'Louis XVII' from amongst the members of the Order and the Maltese people. The Grand Master, however, asserted the law of neutrality and they were told to leave the Islands. Before they did so, they were able to enlist some novices of the Order and several Maltese young men.

The English and the Spanish Fleets succeeded in recruiting sailors and craftsmen, their recruiting sergeants going the rounds of the casals with drums and interpreters. Munitions of war were also supplied to these fleets.

A Prodigy of Mohammed

In 1796, much of the plate of the Order was melted down for money, as the large loans of the Treasury from neutral and friendly sources were exhausted.

Poverty and misery began to be manifest in Malta.

An unpleasant report had long been before the 'Sacro Consiglio' of the low state of the finances of the Order. The secretary, the Chevalier Bosredon de Ransijat, estimated in this that the annual losses to the Order by the confiscation of their property in France would amount to 580,000 scudi.

The Commanderies in the countries of the Allied Powers would hardly be able to increase their 'responsions' or make other contributions to the Treasury.

War had laid its blighting hand upon the nations. 'To-day,' cries Doublet, 'no one thinks save of himself.' What hope from the 'puissances protectrices' could be expected ?

About this time when the Treasury of the Order was empty, they saw arrive at Malta an Ambassador from the Emperor of Morocco to buy 1200 slaves.

'It is a gift from Heaven,' said the Administrators of the Treasury—'to save us from distress.'

'It is a miracle of San Giovanni,' said their Maltese clerks—to whom came the gift of a tax per head on such sales !

'It is a prodigy of Mohammed,' cried the poor slaves.

For Doublet, it was an act of piety in a prince considered a barbarian, and one of which few Christians would be capable. Simply put, it was the accomplishment of a vow which this religious prince had made when dangerously ill. They made him pay 100 louis per head into the Treasury, to say nothing of the 10 per cent magistral receipts, the rights of the captain of the port, of the clerks, and of the 'argousins des Bagnes', who kept the slave-prisoners. Money, too, had to be disbursed by the Emperor for clothes for the released slaves, and for their keep and transport on their way back to their various homes.

Great were the rejoicings at Malta on all sides, and not the least on the part of the slaves themselves.

CHAPTER XIII

CIBON'S WEEKLY LETTER

Doublet's Difficulties—Fresh Instructions to Cibon—A Chance Wind—Cibon is Upset—Further Complications—A Minister Extraordinary!—Waiting for the Peace

CIBON, while wearily waiting for a decision in his favour, wrote in cipher to the Grand Master once or twice a week from Paris, judging the political picture as it appeared to most thinking people at the time. After the surprising success of the French armies, Cibon impressed upon the Prince the real situation in relation to the Order.

Nearly all the possessions of the Order had been sold and their restitution was impossible. Even the property not yet sold could not be returned, because, like other properties which had been declared national, it was mortgaged against the Assignats. Any proposal, therefore, which diminished this security would be badly received by the Directory.

Prussia had already made peace with France, Spain was on the point of doing so. The other Powers would not be long in following their example. After the total dissolution of the Coalition they must consider the Republic as imperishable and the counter-revolution as a chimera. They were wrong at Malta in allowing anything else to be thought possible, nor should they allow the French, their cockade and the flags of their ships to be insulted there. They were wrong, too, in allowing the English to recruit sailors, workmen, and munitions of war.

Such actions were infractions of neutrality and to boast of them at Malta (as some did) had very unhappy results. The Directory had testified their discontent with them, and even with the reception and assistance given to the 'émigrés' who had gone to Malta—mortal enemies of the Republic. To continue such a policy was to court the hatred of the French Government and possibly to provoke its vengeance.

Doublet duly deciphered these letters of Cibon and submitted them to the Grand Master. De Rohan, however, was surrounded by counter-revolutionaries, who could consider only as a 'democrat', a person like Cibon who could dare to tell him such truths without any disguise. Doublet, indeed, told the Grand Master that Cibon's first duty was not to deceive and flatter him, as did most of the Knights about him. To persist in desiring, and believing in, the restoration of the Monarchy and of the property of the Order was to imitate the blindness of the Jews who believed that the Messiah was still to come. The decree of the Assembly was unjust and unfortunate, but it was not by insults and by breaches of neutrality that they would remedy the situation. France was too great, too strong, too proud to suffer such injuries with impunity. Instead of provoking her animosity and vengeance, it would be more prudent to act towards her with 'ménagement', regard and circumspection, while awaiting the favourable moment when the Order could make its just complaints and open her eyes to her true interests.

Doublet's Difficulties

These representations did not always have the effect upon the Grand Master which Doublet had the right to expect. They supported, it is true, the arguments of Cibon and destroyed a chimerical hope which was cherished like an idol; but they also caused Doublet to be regarded as a 'democrat', the more so as he was observed to visit the houses of the members of the Order who had expressed philosophic opinions favourable to the Revolution, and had shown attachment to France as their country—all which was considered criminal.

It was well known that Doublet disapproved of the insults offered both by the Knights and the 'émigrés' to the captains of French ships and their crews, who were, according to the laws of neutrality, disarmed when they entered the Port of Malta.

This situation much troubled the mind of the Grand Master, who naturally felt embarrassed by the unpopularity of his Secretary. Doublet asked him if, in fact, he had any reproach to make to him as to this correspondence with Cibon. All the letters were concerned solely with the interests of the Order. Doublet's own letters going out of Malta, were only to ambassadors, ministers, or their secretaries, and all the replies came back to him in the letter-bag addressed to the Grand Master—Doublet would gladly have the Grand Master open and read them all himself. If there was any suspect correspondence, he would hardly have had it sent thus to his chief.

Once, indeed, Doublet prayed the Grand Master to allow him to hand back the keys of the Secretariat and to accept his resignation if there was the least doubt as to the correctness of his principles—but he had the satisfaction of seeing the Grand Master moved to tears, of hearing him say that, however much they sought to injure Doublet with him, he was too convinced of his probity, his devotion to his person and the interests of the Order, ever to fail to do justice to them on all occasions upon which persons envious of Doublet attacked his conduct or his principles in his, de Rohan's, presence.

'They must, of course, think as I do, but they cannot forgive you for going with persons whom they consider republicans and enemies of the Order,' added the Grand Master.

'These persons,' Doublet replied, 'regard the counter-revolution as an unsustainable absurdity. They have the courage to say so. They see the Noblesse and the Order suppressed in France, and they believe that they will never come back. Their opinions are only founded on facts and they are not crimes, and it is unjust to blame them, any more than it is to blame those who state that it is daylight at midday! If you see me going with them, it is because it is my duty, in the position I hold, to get away from those who disseminate only errors and chimeras. If these people have any "arrière-pensées" against the Order, I am not aware of them. But this I do know, that the Order can very well continue its existence in Malta, even if it were to lose all its commanderies in France, provided the new French Government declares sincerely that it is anxious to see this Island preserve its neutrality and remain in the hands of the Order.'

'Why is such a declaration necessary?' asked the Grand Master.

'For your tranquillity and that of the Order, Monseigneur,' replied Doublet, 'and also because if the French Government undertakes to make it in solemn form, you have nothing more to fear from the past and you can hope for a favourable hearing at the general peace when you ask for an indemnity—if the demand is moderate and founded upon interests held in common with France.' But, frankly, he thought that if the Republic refused to make the declaration now, it would be an indication to Malta that it was dangerous to persist in such a demand.

Fresh Instructions to Cibon

It was accordingly enjoined upon Cibon to sound the Directory adroitly on their true disposition to the Order, to represent that the deprivation of their French revenues forced them to reduce their military and hospitaller activities until, in a happier time, the French Government would find a means of indemnifying them; that they realized that this was impossible at present, but while waiting, the Grand Master hoped that the French Government would declare that they took a real interest in the existence of the Order in the Island of Malta, as a neutral State, useful to all the nations of Europe because of its hospitality and the protection of its ports in the middle of the Mediterranean.

Cibon was to impress on them the fact that the Grand Master had rejected all the proposals which the other Powers had made to him, some even with the offer of a subsidy, to enter the Coalition, and that several of the Great Powers had taken this refusal of the Order badly.

The Order had also been urged to seek territories in Russia for new commanderies, territories which, they were told, could be had for the asking, but the Grand Master, though he had felt the need of making good their losses in France, had refused this offer also, knowing that the Directory would not look with favour on this new departure.

This démarche was made in due course by the intrepid Cibon, but the Directory avoided making any reply, on one ground or another, and gave no indication of their intentions. Its failure disheartened the Grand Master, who declared that Cibon was 'no good', and 'ineffective'.

This remark was very unfair. Cibon had not disguised the fact that, as he had not been formally accredited to the Directory, all he said and did could and should only be considered as preparatory and confidential. The Directory, likewise, expressed their opinion to him in the same spirit, and they would put nothing in writing. If the Order wanted anything done officially, it was indispensable to send him letters of credit.

Doublet, following the device which had been settled upon in these delicate matters, reported this to his chief. The Grand Master replied that they must wait until Spain signed the peace with France, after which they could nominate someone, in conformity with the rules, to the Embassy at Paris, but under the protection of the Ambassador of Spain, and that Cibon would, at the same time, be named 'adjoint et conseiller de l'ambassadeur de l'Ordre'. Cibon, on being informed of this proposed arrangement, was dissatisfied. His ambition, rather than his desire to serve the Order, had mastered him.

A Chance Wind

Things were in this situation, when a chance wind brought a frigate of the Republic, *la Sensible*, into harbour at Malta. The captain of this ship desired to refit and take supplies on board. He had some difficulty in doing so, as the Maltese merchants were apparently not willing to take the new French paper money. The Grand Master accommodated the French officer with the necessary funds in another currency.

There was at Malta at the time a French Knight, the Chevalier Barras, a cousin of the member of the Directory of that name, and with the French ship in the harbour he saw a chance of realizing his wish to get back to Paris. Barras spoke to Doublet of the possibility of so doing, and, at the same time, offered his services to the Grand Master, as an Envoy of the Order. The Prince was astonished at this offer, because Barras was a known and declared partisan of the Revolution and, he believed, an enemy of the Order—so the other Knights, at least the counter-revolutionaries, were pleased to consider. Barras, in consequence, was disliked. This angered him, but did not prevent him keeping to his opinions, for he was strong-minded—being really, as Doublet says, the enemy of abuses and privileges only, and not of the Order. Also, he was only a novice, and could still embrace another state, since the Order was suppressed in France.

The Grand Master, after discussion with Doublet, agreed that the conduct and character of the Chevalier Barras were without reproach; that they ought to be glad of his offer to help the Order in view of his influence with his relative, the Director Barras; and that in spite of the custom of the Order, he should be entrusted, as Envoy, with its interests in France.

A fresh difficulty now presented itself—to the delight of the die-hards of the Sacred Council, who desired no accommodation with the Directory, and to the despair of those who wished to get something done. Barras was only a novice, not a full Knight, and the rules required that 'political missions were to be entrusted only to a *professed* Knight of the Order'.

The Grand Master procrastinated. He would not issue any letter of authority to this Knight before he was assured that the Directory would favourably receive an Envoy from the Order. They must write again to Cibon. . . .

Barras was humiliated by this decision. Doublet tried to mend matters, suggesting to him that on his arrival at Paris, it would be easy for him to obtain the acceptance, by the Directory, of his appointment as Envoy, and that on obtaining this, the Grand Master at Malta would immediately send him a letter of authority to act in the name of the Sacred Council of the Order.

Barras appeared satisfied and sailed for France in *la Sensible.* At the same time Cibon was informed by Doublet of the situation. It is again explained to him that as he was not 'réçu dans l'Ordre', he could be appointed, as the Grand Master had told him already, only as Counsellor to the Embassy.

Cibon is Upset

Every system has its breaking point. This faithful clerk was not satisfied with the arrangement and showed his resentment. When the Chevalier Barras, having reached Paris, presented himself, Cibon received him coldly, and spoke to him only in monosyllables. Barras, in turn, naturally became angered and went off to see 'his cousin' in the Directory. There Barras was told (so he declared, in a report he then sent to Malta) that they had no good opinion of poor Cibon, and, astonishing fact, that Cibon had *never* spoken to any of them and was imposing accordingly upon the Grand Master in stating he had communications with members of the Directory.

This statement of Barras may be questioned. Political memories are often conveniently feeble!

Further, Barras stated that, though he personally had been very well received by the Directory on his arrival at Paris, they were surprised that he was not commissioned to speak for the Order. They asked the reason and made many complaints against the Government of Malta.

The Directory apparently knew all that was happening at Malta against France, against the French and against their partisans—the Republic had no doubt already placed its spies there.

For himself, though angered at his treatment, Barras renewed his offer of service to the Grand Master.

At one stage in these tortuous proceedings, the Grand Master, it seems, wrote to the Bailli Saint-Simon—whom we have already met long ago in the brilliant society of the Prince Bourbon-Conti in the 'Enclos du Temple'—to act in concert with Cibon when opportunity arose. At the same time he wrote, privately, it would appear, and without the knowledge of the Sacred Council, to the Bailli de Foresta to join these two persons in Paris if he could extricate himself from his difficulties in Genoa.

But on June 29, 1795, Cibon wrote that the Bailli Saint-Simon was not suitable, in this crisis, to handle affairs with the Republican party—his opinions, his tone, his aristocratic manner of life, his parsimony, his ailing health, were against him. De Foresta, too, was no longer the person to assist them. He had neither the character nor the powers necessary for success. Probably de Foresta was broken in health with the trials he had undergone.

Further Complications

At length the peace with Spain was signed. The Ambassador of Spain, the Marquis del Campo, arrived at Paris. His own Government had, as previously requested from Malta, recommended the affairs of the Order to his care. The Grand Master had himself already written to him in favour of Cibon, and advising him, del Campo, of his intention to appoint an Ambassador to the Republic, the moment they saw that one could be favourably received.

The Marquis del Campo replied to the Grand Master that the Order could fittingly nominate Cibon, assured the Grand Master that he would be well received as a Minister, and stated that he had actually presented him to the Directory as the intended Minister, and that his services, his zeal, and his intelligence fitted him, more than any other, for the mission.

To complicate matters, there came to the Grand Master a letter from the Chevalier Lomellini, the Minister of the Order at Genoa, proposing the Bailli de Foresta as an Envoy to the Directory.

We left the Bailli de Foresta, as will be remembered, a prisoner on parole in Genoa, on the breakdown of his mission to Malta about establishing a French commercial depot there.

The French Consul in Genoa was now M. Villars, who had replaced M. Tilly, removed when Robespierre fell. He became a great friend of de Foresta and Lomellini. They talked over the whole affair, de Foresta's mission and the future of the Order. The brave de Foresta seemed to them to be the very man to represent the Order in Paris, and accordingly they tried to arrange for this.

M. Villars wrote to the Directory at Paris, and in due course received full powers from his Government to set de Foresta free. The Chevalier Lomellini, as we have said, had already sent a like suggestion to the Grand Master at Malta.

All these propositions embarrassed de Rohan. To show no preference between Cibon, Barras and de Foresta, the Grand Master made a new selection, thereby complicating matters further. His choice this time, apparently his own, was the Bailli d'Hannonville, who, though somewhat lost to sight since the beginning of the Revolution, had from time to time given signs of life in protests sent to the local authorities in his bailiwick, and had at least the merit of remaining in France. We may imagine him to have been the friend of de Rohan, for he enjoyed, among others, the magistral commandery of Salins in Auvergne. It was not, however, certain where he was or how to reach him. The instructions of the Sacred Council of the 13th July, 1796, had, therefore, to be written to Cibon in Paris. Cibon, the record reads, is 'empowered to act under the Spanish Ambassador with such other Knights as are resident there, including the Chev. François Joseph Tusano d'Hannonville'.

A Minister Extraordinary!

When d'Hannonville was duly discovered and had taken over the duties of Minister Extraordinary of the Order at Paris, he was liberally supplied with funds—an immediate payment of 5000 scudi and an allowance of 1000 scudi a month for his needs—and there were many eulogistic references to him in the minutes of the Council, while none were found for the clerk Cibon.

The Chevalier d'Hannonville was introduced to the Directory at Paris, according to plan, by the Spanish Ambassador, and it was he who presented the long-looked for 'lettres de créances' to their Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Citizen de la Croix. What was his astonishment to hear from the Citizen Minister that it was not agreeable to the Directory to receive a representative of an Order which still insisted upon distinctions of birth, and, on returning to his apartments from this unpleasant interview, he was still more astonished to receive an order to leave Paris within twenty-four hours!

This repulse, mortifying for both the Chevalier d'Hannonville and for the Order, made a great sensation in Malta. Cibon, in reporting it, seemed little affected, and that made them think he was to blame. Barras, too, wrote to his friends at Malta in a tone of ironical humour about the matter which made him suspect also. The real cause, however, lay in a statement which appeared in the letters the Ambassador presented to the Minister de la Croix, that the principal object of the *mission was to demand the restoration of the possessions of the Order in France.*

It was the privilege, indeed, of the Grand Master to make the appointments of Ambassadors. De Rohan had instructed Doublet to draw up the letters of appointment in the most careful and diplomatic terms and to communicate them to the Sacred Council. This was done, but, unknown to Doublet, the addition of the above statement was made. Thus secret diplomacy defeated its own object. All accommodation with the Directory was at an end!

Waiting for the Peace

After this, no serious effort was made to appoint an Ambassador at Paris. It was again considered best to wait for the general peace, when in the Concert of Europe a special Envoy of the Order might arrange a concordat with France.

The Bailli de Virieu was written to at Lausanne to ask him, 'though he loved solitude', to consent to act as the special envoy of the Order at that general peace, as 'one whose character, abilities, unflagging energy, and perfect knowledge of the situation, the laws and political procedure of the Order' well qualified him to do.

The Commandeur de Toussard, the General of Engineers on the Council of War and also a man of affairs, was to join de Virieu from Malta on that occasion as Secretary and Counsellor to the Legation. An elaborate 'mémoire' on the position of the Order was, in fact, drawn up by the Commandeur de Toussard, approved by the Grand Master and sent to Cibon to print and distribute to the members of the National Convention to prepare their minds on the subject. It is not known whether Cibon had the courage to print this document, or, if so, what was its effect.

All Cibon's good offices counted for nothing. Doublet to the end was ungrudging in his praise of this colleague, whom he had never seen, and pours forth to the Commandeur Maisonneuve a well-merited eulogy upon his constancy. In apostrophe he exclaims:

'M. Cibon, who for four years without any assignment or salary has borne all the expense of the correspondence, without any official dignity, except that which he has given himself, and who has consequently to expose himself to incur personal unpleasantness for the good of our service, is not worth remunerating for it. He who does not cease to repeat that he has sold all he possessed so as to be able to remain at the post which his devotion to us has made him adopt, and implores the means to continue to serve us there; who, being frequently invited to the dinners which the diplomatic corps give among themselves, can find no excuse for refusing and has to invite them back in return: and who finally declares that without prompt help he will be forced to retire, gets for his only answer a reference to such and such a member of the Order, which one has perhaps neither the will nor the means to give him what he needs. They do not fail to understand that he must have spent a lot of money to support himself and to have kept us instructed as he has done during these four years; they even agree that it would be just to give him what he asks; and yet they decide nothing; they even refuse on the grounds that he had already received more than enough to keep him, in the eighty louis gratuity and in the plate and decorations of the Order, worth from twelve to fourteen thousand francs, which d'Estourmel had deposited in Cibon's house, and which they had allowed Cibon to sell.'

Thus the years of opportunity slipped by at Malta, where the Order still remained, if in poverty, at least in peace, while the rest of the world was at war; and, in the April of 1796, Doublet wrote from Valletta to the Commandeur de Maisonneuve, who was standing by in Switzerland with the valiant de Virieu, in the following anguish of mind:

> 'Nothing succeeds with us . . . nothing, I repeat, succeeds with us here. This security, or rather this state of apathy, to my mind inconceivable, disheartens me, disgusts me, and if it lasts much longer will kill me. A continual change of front, a complete indecision, chimerical fears and hopes equally chimerical—such is our pitiable and unhappy policy.'

CHAPTER XIV

A NEW DEPARTURE AND DE ROHAN'S DEATH

A New Departure—De Rohan's views upon the Russian Mission—Last Days of de Rohan—The Grand Master's Will—His Debtors—'Fictitious Commanderies'—His Epitaph

IN 1795, the Grand Master consented to send a mission to Russia, in hope of restoring some of the fortunes of the Order. The Bailli the Comte de Litta was the envoy, and his instructions, according to a letter sent in cipher, in August 1795, made it clear that a real reason existed for his undertaking.

A 'Priory of Poland' had been created in 1774, as a sort of associated body of Knights, without representation upon the central Government at Malta. Poland had been partitioned by the Great Powers, and some of the Commanderies of this Priory now lay in Russian territory. The Priory had contributed little in revenue to the Order for the honorary association it enjoyed, and now it was contributing less. Arrangements had therefore to be made for its future in a partitioned Poland.

In particular, an agreement had to be come to with the Government of the Empress Catherine as to the status of the tenants on the lands of the Commanderies in Russian Poland, her new subjects as they were.

The Empress Catherine, in 1784, had sent a certain Captain Psaro as an Agent to be accredited to the Grand Master, with a view to extending her power in the Mediterranean, being desirous, amongst other things, of reviving a great Empire of which she might be Empress. The Court of Versailles had protested at the time against this extension of Russian power, and the matter dropped.

The French Republic equally objected to the new move by de Rohan, as it did not wish to see a Russian establishment in Malta which might open further the Mediterranean to the Russian Fleet. The King of Spain, at peace with France, also objected.

When the Empress Catherine died in 1796, her son, the Emperor Paul I, succeeded. He had always had a romantic regard for the orders of chivalry, and as a child, it is said, loved to dress up as a Knight of Malta. The Emperor conceived the idea of a Grand Priory of Russia and proposed its formation to the Comte de Litta. The Order, in its straitened condition, readily agreed to the proposal, and concluded a treaty with the Emperor for the new establishment in the face of France and Spain.

An elaborate document was accordingly dispatched in 1797 from the Emperor Paul to Malta by two routes, containing the articles of agreement. One copy fell into the hands of General Bonaparte in Italy. The other copy reached the Grand Master de Rohan safely and filled the Sacred Council with great hopes of a powerful ally.

When General Bonaparte in the following year expelled the Order from Malta, the existence of this Russian Priory made it possible for some of the Knights, dissatisfied with von Hompesch, then Grand Master, to go to Russia to find an asylum in S. Petersburg from their new patron. These Knights, conforming to the vanity of the Emperor, declared Hompesch deposed, and recognized the Emperor Paul as their Grand Master.

De Rohan's Views upon the Russian Mission

It should be stated that, according to Doublet, the Grand Master de Rohan himself had never many hopes from the alliance with Russia.

'The Order,' he said, 'will perhaps derive a momentary advantage from it; but we shall incur the anger of the new rulers of France for it. Though our statutes perfectly allow this arrangement, the Directory will suspect that the move has been made by Russia to use the Port of Malta as a grand means of destroying the Ottoman Empire in Europe. This suspicion will serve the Directory as a pretext for attacking us and seizing our Island.

'You are still young, my dear Doublet,' added the Grand Master affectionately, 'I will be then no more, but remember what I have said to you. Remember also that after de Litta went to S. Petersburg I always feared that if the friendship of this Power were accorded to us we must expect the mortal hatred of the French demagogues.'

Doublet regarded this piece of prophecy, which was too unhappily verified later, as the effect of the fears inspired by the letters which for some time had been received in Malta from Paris; and of de Rohan's long-standing hatred of 'La Semiramis du Nord' (the Empress Catherine) for whom he had ever manifested nothing but aversion. It may better, he adds, be attributed to the profound knowledge which the Grand Master had of the political system of the Order, formerly perfectly 'en rapport' with the policy pursued by the Court at Versailles. The interests of the commerce of France in the Mediterranean had forced the Grand Master to pay attention to the least umbrage which the Court of Russia might give to the Directory.

Last Days of de Rohan

Weakened by advancing age and ill-health, for he had had an apoplexy in 1791, and with the chagrin of seeing the Order menaced by almost certain ruin, the Grand Master was no longer in a position to control the ship of state with the vigour and firmness necessary.

The matter which distressed him most was, however, the fact that he could not see amongst all the Grand Crosses and high dignitaries of the Order which surrounded him in Malta one single person whose wisdom, prudence, and firmness of mind was sufficient to make him a suitable successor and enable him to save the Order.

'I only see,' said de Rohan one day to Doublet, 'de Virieu or de Litta capable of facing the storm, and they are not here. I have even had thoughts of sending for them, but it is now too late; they would never, either of them, be able to arrive in time, for I feel I have but few hours of life left to me.'

Alas! he spoke only too truly; fifteen days later this great good prince was dead.

The Grand Master's Will

De Rohan died on the 13th July, 1797, aged 72 years. He appointed, in his last moments, as Lieutenant of the Magistry, the Bailli Vachon de Belmont. His will, written in Italian, was dated and signed only seven days before his death. It opened, following precedent, with a profession of his faith as a Christian, recommended his soul to God and prayed the Saints and Patrons of the Order to help him in the hour of death.

Fra Carlo de Greische de Jallaucourt, his Cameriere Maggiore, and the Chevalier Miari, the Italian Secretary, were the executors, and various accounts and papers, known as the *Introito dello spoglio*, were presented by them to the Treasury. Some of the entries give a glimpse of the last sad scene: the payments to various sacristans for wax candles burnt and for the ringing of bells in the churches, including the chapel in the Fort of S. Elmo, for the Grand Master during his agony;

payments to his medical attendants, a French and a Maltese doctor; to a nurse from the Hospital; to a surgeon for the embalming of the body; to the Prior of the Conventual Church of S. John for the erection of the *capella ardente*, with its tapestries and black velvet for the funeral; to the Maestro Scudiere Nicolo Rouyer for mourning suits for the followers.

In his will de Rohan wished that his body might be buried in 'our Conventual Church of S. John in a suitable place; and that all excess be avoided'; 1200 scudi were to be spent upon his tomb. He sought the solace of religion in directing the distribution of alms to the poor and that two thousand masses might be said for the repose of his soul, in the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, in the Sotterraneo, and in the Oratory in S. John's Church.

His legacies are not numerous—he has not now so very much to leave—but are sufficiently substantial on paper.

To Prince Vittorio de Rohan he leaves 50,000 scudi; to the Prior of Toulouse 5000 scudi; to his confessor, Fra Evangelista Casha, a Maltese, he leaves 400 scudi. To his *famigliari segreti*, faithful Maltese body servants, he gives the relatively large sum of several thousand scudi each—to Giacomo and Giuseppe Fenech, to Giuseppe Gauci and Nicola Camilleri; a sum also to a French servant, Rocourt; and to his French cook, Cauvin, two thousand scudi. To his tipstaffs, chairbearers, and messengers of the palace, Antonio Gatt, and others whom he cannot recall by name, three months wages 'if they cannot place themselves with his successor'. A special gift also to the same Gatt 'for his help and service in his last infirmity'.

He is anxious that the 30,000 scudi which he had marked out for building the Magazzini del Lazzaretto be applied so that these works be completed according to plan.

These demands, representing a fifth of his property, being paid, the balance went according to the statutes into the Treasury of the Order. His personal effects had fallen in grandeur from the days of his magnificence, but there was a little jewellery, some articles de luxe and much personalia in the palaces of Valletta and of Sant Antonio. There was a large sum of money in cash, some thousands of *Louis d'or* saved against the *assignats*. Inventories of the contents of his rooms were made out; no item of his personal property is too small to list, the contents of his wardrobe, his linen, his silk handkerchiefs, his crystal-headed cane, his tobacco-jars. The books in his library are counted and sent to the Biblioteca; the utensils in the vast kitchens in the two palaces are listed and passed on to his successor.

His debts, which are not very numerous, must be paid by his executors. They appear to consist of moneys obtained on credit from Government Departments, such as the Dogana, through which he drew his personal income to the end. There are only a few personal creditors. He is careful to mention in his will a bill of 1600 scudi due to Antoine Poussielgue, the captain of the port, and this is at once paid.

His Debtors

Against the Grand Master's debts may be set off an enormous sum of money due to him in respect of large loans, not yet fully repaid—and some not at all—which he had made to his colleagues and friends. These loans, many reaching back to 1775, had all been tabulated from time to time in a book marked 'I Debitori del Gran Maestro' and showed the sums which were, in 1797, still to come to de Rohan's estate in future years. The debacle of the next year, 1798, rendered these sums irrecoverable and in consequence they were lost to the Order. Many of the names of these debtors are familiar, as those of persons who have passed through this story—d'Estourmel, de Freslon, de Suffren, Seytres-Caumont, de Litta, de Bosredon Ransijat, and a host of others. The Bailli Hompesch is a debtor to the extent of 21,321 scudi, which need not be repaid until the year 1804. Interesting is the name of the great painter, the servant d'armes Favray, to whom, in 1794, 3000 scudi were lent. He did not find the Revolution so lucrative as did David.

To the Maltese people who also had suffered, de Rohan gave a helping hand, to a Caruana Dingli, for instance, for his losses in 1791, through the rate of exchange; and to the Baron Giovanni Galea for his losses in 1797 in the purchase of materials for a charitable scheme for the unemployed of Malta.

'Fictitious Commanderies'

In making these loans de Rohan had fondly hoped to protect his interests in the following way. As a Knight was promoted to a new commandery and required a sum of ready money to allow him to leave his old post, and take over his new, it had been no unusual thing for the Treasury to advance the same, directing the local Receiver to stop the amount out of the revenues coming to the Commander from his new commandery.

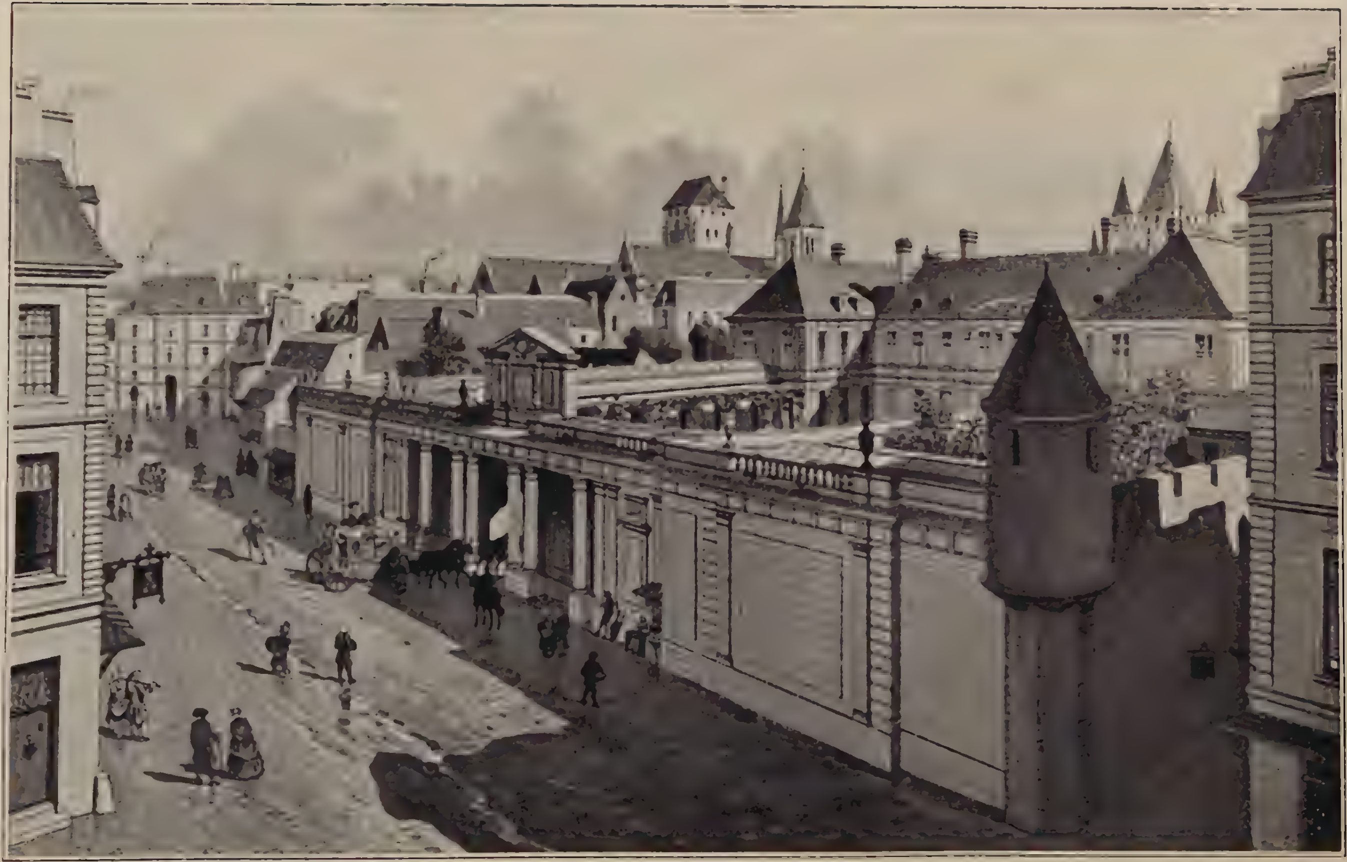
The situation was now different in France, but as a commandery became vacant during the Revolution by the death of a commander, the Grand Master de Rohan often filled the place by the appointment of one of his debtors. The debtor then gave an undertaking to repay the Grand Master the loan 'if and when, on some day in the future, he should come to enjoy the free possession of the same'.

The Directory in Paris, after the suppression of the Order by law, were greatly angered by these appointments to 'fictitious Commanderies', as they called them, and Bonaparte later declared that the Order had infringed the sovereignty of France by making them.

* * *

So died de Rohan, the last Grand Master of Malta to be buried in the Conventual Church of S. John in Valletta. He merits well the epitaph placed upon his tomb, which was rapidly constructed by the Congregation of War in the chapel of S. Paul of the Venerable Langue of France:

D. O. M.
Optato Principi
Benefico egentium patri
EM. M. M. F. EMM. DE ROHAN
QUI
PER XXI ANNOS ARDUIS TEMPORIBUS PRUDENTER
ADVERSIS STRENUE
REMPUBL. GESTANS
NOVUM DECUS S.O. ATTULIT
NEC NON
DUM REVOLVUNTUR REGNA
ABUNDANTIA PACEM JUSTITIA FIDEM
PIETATE AMOREM
POPULORUM
OBTINUIT
OBIIT DIE XIII JULII 1797, AETATIS SUAE 72.



Reconstruction by H. Hoffbauer

Musée Carnavalet

'A LAST VIEW'

The Enclos du Temple as it was in 1789.

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CHAPTER XV

THE FATE OF THE TEMPLE

The Fate of the Temple—The Tower—The Archives—The Church—Strange Figures—The Prior's Palace—An Appreciative Municipality

IT remains to trace the disappearance of the Enclos du Temple and its contents, as we have known them.

The last Royal prisoner, Madame Royale, the daughter of Louis XVI, left the Temple in the year 1795 for Basle, to be exchanged for French prisoners in the hands of the Allies and a large ransom from Austria.

The buildings in the Enclos became national property and were sold to individual speculators and some of the conventual buildings themselves were converted into houses, flats or shops and leased to a new race of residents. The fortifications, from the time of the Templars, were pulled down, and new streets were run across the site.

The Tower

The great Tower was still used as a prison of state by successive Governments. In it Barras, Rewbell and La Revellière were imprisoned by Napoleon before their transportation to Cayenne; also General Pichegru on two occasions, on the last of which he strangled himself; Cadoudal Moreau, Lanjollais and the two Polignacs, Alexis Dumesnil, the Englishman Sidney Smith, who succeeded in escaping from it; and a number of journalists, Royalists, émigrés and politicians obnoxious to the particular party in power.

Napoleon, it is said, disliked to see in the capital of his empire this tower so long associated with the old régime and an ever present reminder of the unjust method of its destruction. On the 16th March, 1808, he issued a decree for its demolition and the transference of the prisoners to the Donjon de Vincennes. On the 7th October of the same year 'a Sieur Morel bought the tower for 338,000 francs on the condition that he would destroy it. He speculated unsuccessfully with it and its destruction had to be hurried on by an order from the police'.

It was finally destroyed in 1811. A weeping willow planted by the Duchess d'Angoulême, on the restoration of the Bourbons in 1814, marked the site down to the last 'eighties'.

The Archives

When they disturbed the archives of the Grand Priory of France, collected for centuries in the second storey of the great Tower, it was to make hurried room for the Royal prisoners. They tore the books, the liasses and bundles of documents from the presses where they had been arranged and labelled in such careful order, and stacked them in the corridors and garrets in the top storey beneath the roof where they were exposed to the sun and rain.

Later they were carried to the Louvre, but many of them were pillaged or lost in transit.

Camus, by a strange irony, had a last few words upon the fate of what remained of these records of chivalry. In Fructidor, year IV of liberty, he had, in his official position on an ecclesiastical or some other committee, to make a decision as to the fate of a considerable mass of papers. He wrote in his report that the Archives of the Temple were in the best order until the 10th August, 1792, but that after that date they had been considerably harmed by the rain, etc. 'We began,' he stated, 'by separating from these papers about 1500 weighty memoirs, invoices, procedures and arrêtés,' and further on he writes, 'The Archives of the Temple have furnished the flames with a large quantity of ancient accounts of fermiers and receveurs. We have preserved the title deeds of property and any pieces useful to history.'

The documents so saved are now in the Archives Nationales in Paris with other papers of the Order since retrieved. What papers, we may wonder, were destroyed by Camus?

The Church of S. Marie du Temple

The Church had been closed with the seals of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1791. It was sold in 1795 as national property and acquired by a former wig-maker, an actual resident in the Enclos, by name Fr. Carlet, who paid 187,500 livres assignats or about 4,000 francs in gold for it.

Some time before this it had been totally rifled of its contents. They had cleared out even the tombs of the Knights, and had taken the lead of their coffins to make into bullets. The bodies of the Knights, turned to dust, were thrown to the winds;

they did not even respect the corpse of the Bailli de Suffren, which was still partly preserved.

Strange Figures

A strange figure appears on this scene of destruction, with a cart and accompanied by industrious if wondering workmen bearing sacks, shovels and pick-axes. He collects such precious fragments of the tombs, of the stained glass, of the pictures as he can unearth from beneath the debris and carries them away with him to the Church of the Petits-Augustins.

This was Lenoir, a painter of Paris, who set himself with the assent—rather grudgingly given, we may imagine—of the National Assembly to form, from the discarded contents of the suppressed religious houses and hotels of the nobility which he systematically visited, a 'Musée des Monumens Françaises'. This collection was encouraged by succeeding Governments and eventually distributed through various suitable centres. Thanks to him we may see to-day in the Cluny Museum the remains of the cenotaph of Grand Master Villiers de l'Isle Adam and of other Grand Priors of the Temple.

⚜ ⚜ ⚜

On the French occupation of Malta the Prior of the Temple Church, M. de Laquenoy, obtained a passport to return to France. He stayed some time in Italy and eventually reached Paris after twelve years' absence.

'His church,' wrote a contemporary, 'had disappeared and he could with difficulty trace the site of his presbytery and of the altar where he had so often sacrificed; but not far from it he found, in the ancient ruins of the gothic cloisters which still stood, a symbol of the immutability of religion. Here, therefore, he was able to speak the words of the Saviour to his former flock, preaching once again to them on the 19th November, 1803. He was afterwards made Parish Priest of the Church of the Quinze-Vingts.'

The Prior's Palace

The palace survived the Revolution and was the last building of the Order of Malta to vanish. It was used in various ways after its confiscation in 1792: first they made it a barracks for gendarmerie, then a decree of 3rd August, 1811, ordered that the buildings be repaired and modified to receive the Ministère des Cultes.

In 1814 Louis XVIII conceded the Palace and the adjoining lands to the Princess de Condé for a Convent of the Nuns of the Order of S. Benedict of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and its old name the 'House of the Temple' was thus restored. 'The Temple is no longer,' writes a contemporary, 'that building which gave refuge to the vagabonds or bankrupts of Paris, but a Temple raised to the glory of the Saviour of Men. It no longer conserves the riches of the sovereign of this world, it keeps the treasures of the King of Kings: instead of the tower flanked with four turrets there is a chapel with four altars.'

The Revolution of 1848 suppressed the convent on the pretext of an illegality in the donation of Louis XVIII. They installed in it for some time an artillery headquarters of the Garde Nationale: then they made it a barracks, then it was abandoned by the State.

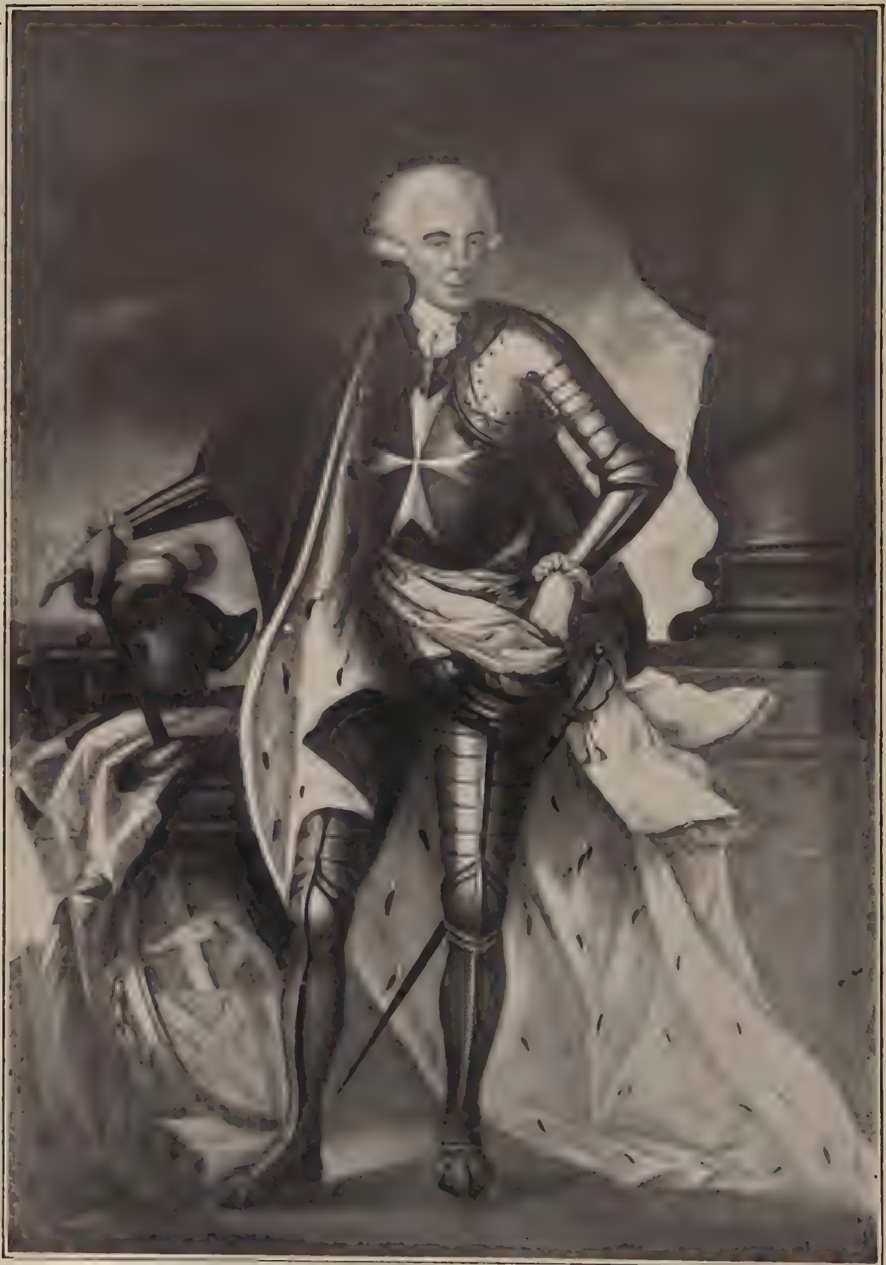
In 1853, it was demolished and 'soon there was not left a stone upon a stone of all that imposing collection of buildings which had stood for so many centuries within the Enclos du Temple.'

An Appreciative Municipality

A plan of the Enclos du Temple as it was in 1793 may be seen on the wall at the junction of the rues Dupetit Thouars and Gabriel-Vicaire, placed there by an appreciative Municipality, for those visitors who come to-day to see the 'Square du Temple'.

PART IV

The Fall of the Order: General Bonaparte takes Malta



GRAND MASTER HOMPESCH, 1797–1805

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CHAPTER I

THE ARMY OF THE EAST

The Patriot Club—Two Ambitious Minds Agree—Hompesch Elected Grand Master—His Character—The Army of the East

THE discontent of the Maltese had taken many forms in 1797. An agitation by a native writer, Vassallo, and a Maltese noble, Barbara, had sought to establish a democratic control of the government of the Order, to allow, amongst other things, a free trade between Turkey and Malta, and to establish a Maltese Langue within the Order. This scheme was embodied in a learned memorial to the Holy See to obtain the necessary alterations in the Rules of the Order, but had failed. The leaders of this first 'Patriot Club' of Malta, as the historian Panzavecchia calls it, were then driven into a subterranean conspiracy, with some French Knights, to hand the Islands over to the French Republic. This plot was discovered and dealt with by a Commission of Enquiry appointed by the Grand Master, the ringleaders being imprisoned and then exiled.

Vassallo and Barbara, landing in Italy, made their way to Milan, met General Bonaparte there, reported to him the unsettled state of their country and asked the intervention of the Republic.

Their representations fitted in with Bonaparte's own views, and he is found writing to the Directory on 26 May, 1797, suggestively: 'The Island of Malta is for us of great importance—the Grand Master is dying and it would appear that a German will be his successor. . . .

. . . Why should not our Fleet (or that of Spain) on its way to the Atlantic, pass in that direction and capture it? . . .

. . . The Knights are only 500 and the regiment of the Order counts only 600 men. If we do not adopt these means, Malta will fall into the hands of the King of Naples. This small Island is priceless for us.'

Bonaparte had, as the reader knows, long dreamt of an Eastern Empire in which he would play a personal part. De Bourrienne, the close friend of his school-days, and later to become one of his secretaries, has given a picture of him in the period of his unemployment in 1792: 'Time passed away and none of his projects succeeded—none of his applications were listened to: he was vexed by the injustice with which he was treated and tormented by the desire of entering upon some active pursuit. He could not endure the thought of being buried in the crowd. He determined to quit France; and the favourite idea, which he never afterwards relinquished, that the East is a fine field for glory, inspired him with the wish to proceed to Constantinople and enter the service of the Grand Seigneur. . . . What romantic plans, what stupendous projects he conceived!'

De Bourrienne had looked upon Bonaparte at the time as a half-crazy young fellow and did not believe in the idea of the East as a field for glory, but was told by him that Junot, Marmont, and some other young officers, whom he had known at Toulon, would be willing to follow his fortunes. De Bourrienne, therefore, helped Bonaparte to the extent of copying out, and sending many times, an application to the Minister of War asking that they would send him and other suitably selected French officers upon a mission to Turkey, to bring the Eastern armies of the Sultan up to a modern standard and 'to make them allies of France so necessary', as the document reiterated, 'at the moment when the Empress of Russia has strengthened her union with the Emperor of Austria'.

Now, in 1797, Talleyrand had returned to France from exile in America and had seen sufficient there to encourage him in the belief that France had sadly neglected colonization. He had the vision of a French Empire in the Near East and in North Africa. In these places would be found the 'new regions of rest, of enterprise, and of change' so desired by many of his fellow-countrymen. Thus the great diplomatist expressed himself in the famous address on the 'Advantages to be derived from Colonization', delivered on 3 July, before the National Institute in Paris. The impression made by this address was profound, both on the Directory and on the public. It struck a welcome note in the period of disappointment and discontent which followed the violence of the Revolution. Talleyrand was placed in the Ministry of External Affairs, with Delacroix, and was soon to correspond with General Bonaparte, then in Italy, upon the vast project of a French Empire overseas.

Two Ambitious Minds Agree

The possession of Malta by the French as a pivotal position in the Mediterranean seemed essential to the success of this project.

To take Malta by open attack would present difficulties. If the Knights resisted, it might prove impregnable, or a long siege would have to be undertaken which might draw the fleets of the Coalition upon the forces of the Republic to their disaster. Malta must be acquired peacefully, or if by force, then swiftly. With this end in view, the minds of Bonaparte and Talleyrand were continually occupied with the Maltese situation. From May 1797 to June 1798, despite the other vast problems with which they were concerned, a continual and detailed correspondence was kept up between them. From it we learn of the elaborate system of espionage and secret influences established in Malta to prepare the ground for a French occupation.

Vassallo and Barbara were sent by Bonaparte to Paris to be examined by the Directory. Barbara was granted a commission as an 'ensigne de vaisseau', on the *Dubois*, under Captain Le Joille, to give him some authority and status in negotiation with his fellow-Maltese. Admiral Brueys, many leagues away, was sent for by Bonaparte to discuss at Passariano with him, 'if only for thirty-six hours', the completion of this 'petite expedition'.

French ships touching at Malta played their part in the plan. One landed Barbara secretly, in November '97, to meet his fellow-conspirators and learn their dispositions. Another ship called after a few days and took him away with equal secrecy. A French officer, a spy, was brought to Malta, ostensibly to recuperate in a house in salubrious Sliema after a severe illness.

Notable amongst the emissaries was Poussielgue, first clerk in the French Legation at Genoa, who openly arrived at Malta 'to report to his Government upon the seaports of the Levant', but who secretly carried treasonable correspondence to his cousin Poussielgue, the captain of the port, an employé of the Order. He drew up, as the result of his eighteen-days' residence in Malta, an elaborate report upon the situation.

Individual Maltese were also, openly or secretly, taken away in French ships, some recruited as sailors, some as artificers—humble people who would prove useful guides later on when the French troops landed; or more educated persons, like the 'hot-headed patriot', mentioned by Admiral Brueys, 'who has abandoned wife, children, and profession, in order to give his services to the French'.

The houses of Caruson, the Agent of the Republic, of Poussielgue, the captain of the port, and of Patot and Eynaud, the official purveyors of the French Navy (established from the days of the Monarchy in Malta), were convenient centres in which the conspirators could meet one another.

The Maltese historian Vassallo gives a list of Knights and other members of the Order who had been accused of participating in these activities.

Hompesch elected Grand Master

Grand Master de Rohan died on 13 July, 1797, as we have already seen, and Ferdinand von Hompesch was elected his successor.

The new Grand Master issued the usual circular letter, couched in flowery phrase, announcing his election to the Sovereigns of Europe.

The French Republic was informed in a letter, of 17 July, in which Hompesch wrote of his 'satisfaction in seeing all classes of the Maltese nation displaying the sincerest joy and lavishing upon him, in a spirit of universal emulation, the most touching marks of their love and fidelity. Nothing further was required, to complete his extreme happiness, than the possession of a proof that the Citizen Directors would participate in these feelings towards him'. He conveyed, as his predecessors had done, his 'attachment and due deference' to the French nation.

The reader will be interested to learn that in it M. Cibon is officially described as the 'Chargé d'Affaires of the Order at Paris', and is entrusted with the delivery of the letter.

His Character

Poussielgue, in his report upon his mission to Malta where he stayed from 24 December, 1797, to January 11, 1798, has given us a striking sketch of the Grand Master:

'It is the French Knights who have elected Hompesch. He had promised them to continue the assistance which de Rohan had given them. He has kept his word, and most of the high offices in the Order, in his giving, have been given to them.

'The Grand Master is very popular and generous. He shows himself often to the people and throws them money.

'He is extremely affable with every one, and though his range of knowledge is very limited, he judges well and knows how to keep the esteem and affection of the Knights of all nations as well as of the people. He joins to these qualities the power of being very discreet and of not letting his secret intentions be known. Up to the present nobody enjoys his confidence exclusively or can boast of being able to exert on his character any outside influence.

'In fine, during my stay at Malta I have heard only good words about him from the Maltese, the Knights (French or foreign), both from aristocrats and from democrats. I see also a testimony of his popularity in the pleasure with which the people come, from the remote parts of the Island, to stand outside his Palace to catch a glimpse of him.

'No one could follow a more judicious or broader policy than he does, in view of the circumstances in which he is placed.

'The Council of the Order is entirely devoted to the Grand Master—though he has only two votes in it—but he alone has the right of proposing those who are to benefit by the favours and employments in its giving, and this prerogative renders him one of the most absolute Princes in Europe—especially since all the Langues of France have become pensioners on the bounty of the Treasury of the Order.'

There is no word, in this analysis, of the irresolution which history has commonly attributed to this Grand Master, though it may be remarked it is only 'affability' and 'diplomacy' which are stressed and there is no mention of 'resolution' as an ingredient of the character.

The Army of the East

By May of 1798, the great Army of the East, protected by a vast fleet, was ready to sail from Toulon with General Bonaparte, only twenty-nine years of age, as Commander-in-chief.

Its destination had been kept secret, as far as was possible, until the moment of its departure.

The army at Toulon, indeed, had originally been called the 'Army of England' for the intended invasion of Great Britain and Ireland, but Bonaparte abandoned this objective on the grounds of prudence. The public then thought it was to be used to attack the enemy possessions in the Atlantic.

This remarkable armament reached the number of 49,600 officers and men, carried in some 500 vessels—ships of war, transports, and convoys. So large a fleet, as it was when it reached the waters of Malta, had never been seen within memory, and many Maltese writers recorded their impressions of it.

Bonaparte was in complete command—of both its naval and military operations—and the four Admirals—Brueys, Blanquet-Duchayla, Villeneuve, and Decrès—had when occasion arose, as at Alexandria, to execute his orders even against their judgement.

Bonaparte's restless versatility had directed many details of this army's preparation, whether he was in the field in Italy or at the Ministry of War in Paris. 'He worked day and night,' says de Bourrienne, 'upon his project. Orders and instructions succeeded one another with extraordinary rapidity and flew from Paris or Toulon to Civita Vecchia, Marseilles, Genoa, or Naples, whence contingents of warships and soldiers were to join the main body when it had put out to sea. By these additions it is probable the strength of the expedition reached 60,000 men.'

Ways and means were left to General Berthier. . . . 'Make me Treasurer,' he had said to Bonaparte at Rome, when the project was mooted, 'and I will fill the chest.' As the finances were often badly managed by the Government Departments of the Revolution, officials not receiving in time the money voted to them, Bonaparte transferred, direct to the Army chest, much of the money that he had taken from the Italian States, and three million francs in currency were carried by the expedition.

The disposition of the forces before Malta and Alexandria was in some cases settled, long in advance of the time of attack, with his own hand in his office at Paris. If he wanted an order of the Directory, he often wrote it out and went in person to the Luxembourg to get it signed by one of the Directors.

As the months passed the enthusiasm of the Directory for the expedition somewhat waned, yet it is said that Bonaparte exercised such a personal ascendancy over its members that when the final decision to launch it came to be taken, their secret decree was written by him.

This decree was drawn up on April 12. It contained eight arrêtés. Some of them remained in manuscript, bearing the express order that they 'were not to be printed'.

In the authority thus given to Bonaparte, the Directory retained no control over their General. He could depart with his forces for the East and return when he willed.

By these arrêtés accordingly:

The name of the 'Army of England' was changed to that of the 'Army of the East'.

Bonaparte was authorized to occupy Egypt.

He was to drive the English out of all their possessions in the East.

He was to hold the Red Sea as the 'free and exclusive possession of the French Republic'.

The Isthmus of Suez was to be cut.

The success of these ambitious plans would naturally lead to a conquest of British India by the Republic.[1]

The expedition sailed from Toulon on 19 May of the year 1798.

The intellectual side had not been forgotten. 'Bonaparte had conceived,' wrote de Bourrienne, 'the idea of joining to the expedition men distinguished in science and art, whose labours have made known in its present and past state the land of Egypt, the very name of which is never pronounced without exciting grand recollections. These savants, historians, scientists, and archæologists were transported in a ship appropriately named the *Franklin*. Amongst these was an ex-Knight of Malta, the Commander Dolomieu, who was induced to come by his friends Berthellet and Monge.'

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[1] The sixth arrêté referred to Malta as follows:

The Executive Directory. Considering that the Order of Malta has by its own action, and since the commencement of the present war, placed itself in hostility towards France, as expressed in a manifesto of the Grand Master, bearing date the 10th October, 1794; and that by this insolent document he has declared, that he neither can, nor ought, nor desires to acknowledge the French Republic; that the efforts he has made before, and since, in aid of the coalition of the armed Sovereigns against Liberty have throughout confirmed the same; that quite recently the cup of iniquity has been filled to the brim in his attempts against the Republic, by receiving with open arms, and admitting to the highest dignitaries, Frenchmen universally known as the bitterest enemies of the country, and for ever disgraced for having carried arms against her; and that appearances lead to the belief that it is his intention to deliver the Islands to one of the Powers still at war with France, through which French trade in the Mediterranean would be paralysed. And as this Order is, to all intents and purposes, in the same position towards the French Republic as all the other Powers with whom, at the time of the establishment of the Constitutional *régime*, France was found in a state of war, they, without previous declaration on their part, have voluntarily placed themselves in that position.

And as, in consequence, no act of the Legislative Body is necessary to authorize the Executive Directory to adopt such measures as the national honour and interests require, they do hereby order as follows:

Art. 1. The Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the East is authorized to take possession of the Island of Malta.

Art. 2. He will proceed at once, with the land and sea forces under his command, to the Island of Malta.

The seventh arrêté was to the following effect:

Art. 1. The order of this day addressed to General Bonaparte, Commander-in-Chief of the 'Army of the East', instructing him to take possession of the Island of Malta, is not to be executed, unless it can be accomplished without prejudicing the success of other operations with which he is charged.

The Directory on this point relies completely on his prudence.

A camp library was carefully chosen by Bonaparte for his own use. A list of over 180 books was made out with his own hand. The Abbé Vertot, in three volumes, it is interesting to note, was included amongst the miscellany of authors.

The stage-management contained carefully prepared manifestoes and letters of goodwill from the French Republic to potentates and peoples of the East, amongst others to Tippoo Sahib, to the King of Ceylon, and to the Sovereign of Tajore, Bonaparte declaring in one of these that he had come 'to deliver them from the iron yoke of England'.

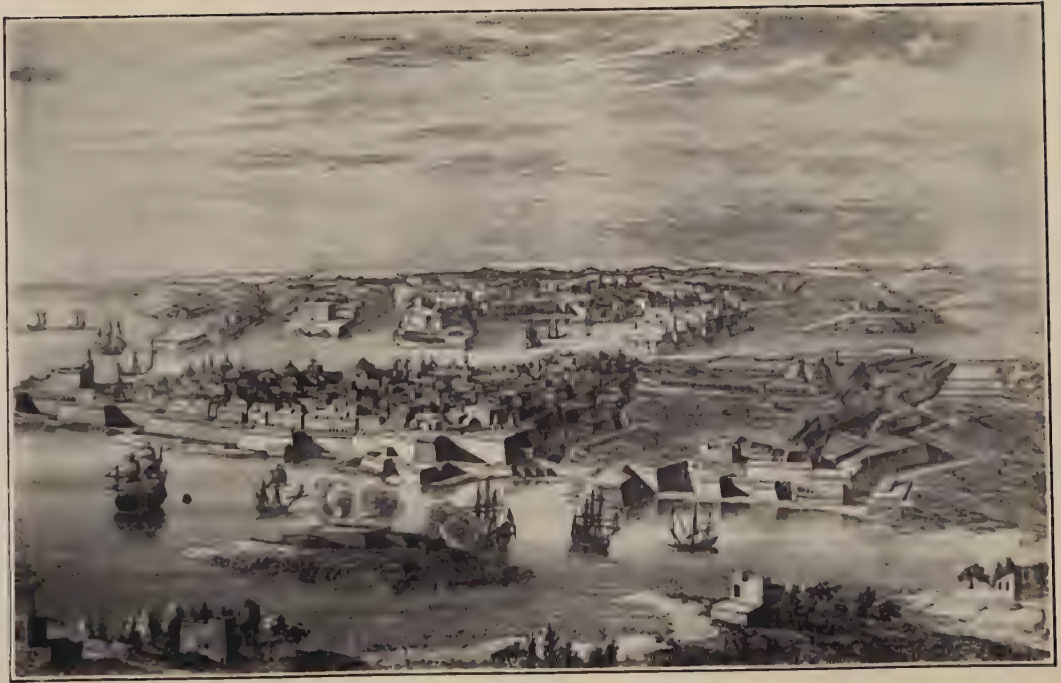
Doctors and teachers, artisans and craftsmen were embarked to bring to these nations the benefits of Western civilization.

The generals were those most illustrious in the military annals of France—Junot, Berthier, Desaix, Hilliers, Lannes, Caffarelli, to name a few.

All, except one, were actively employed upon military operations in the taking of Malta. Kléber, a cavalry leader, to his great discontent, was kept inactive in the *Franklin* with the savants during the landing of the troops.

Vincent Barbara, the Maltese, accompanied the expedition.

Thus Bonaparte sailed, as a second Alexander, with the 'Army of the East'.



VALLETTA AND ITS HARBOURS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Showing the Three Cities and the Land Defences.

To face p. 263

CHAPTER II

THE PROPOSED ATTACK ON MALTA

A Warning—The Plan of Defence—A Dress Rehearsal—Royer's Advice: 'Memoire pour Son Altesse Eminentissime'—A Language Difficulty

DID the Grand Master Hompesch know positively that Malta would be attacked?

Doublet specifically tells us that the Grand Master himself had been informed of the danger for more than six weeks beforehand, both by official despatches and personal letters. The French Secretary, likewise, had received ten or twelve warning letters and these had been duly communicated to the Grand Master.

Finally, six days before the actual landing of the French, an urgent despatch reached Hompesch from the Bailli de Schoenau, the Minister Plenipotentiary of the Order at the Congress still in session at Rastadt—where it had been fondly hoped to retrieve the fallen fortunes of the Knights.

This despatch was dated the 18/19 of May—almost the very time the expedition was sailing from Toulon. It reached the Grand Master on 4 or 5 June, three days before any ships of the French Fleet were sighted at Malta. It was in cipher and had been sent in duplicate. One copy, which Hompesch received, had taken eleven days from Rastadt to Naples, and five more in a *speronara* from Naples to Malta. The other copy had been sent to Malta in a letter from a banker at Milan, but the ship which carried it was seized by the French Fleet outside Malta, and it came into Bonaparte's hands.

It was in the following terms:

> 'MONSEIGNEUR, I have to acquaint you that the formidable expedition now preparing at Toulon is intended for the capture of Malta and Egypt. I have this information from the Secretary of Monsieur Treilhard, one of the French Republican Ministers at the Congress. You will most assuredly be attacked. Take all the steps necessary for your defence. All the Ministers of the various Powers attending this Congress, friends of the Order, have the same intelligence, but they also know that the fortress of Malta is

impregnable, or at least capable of resisting a three months' siege. The honour of Your Eminence and the preservation of the Order are at stake, and if you surrender you will be dishonoured in the eyes of all Europe. Moreover, this expedition is regarded here as a disgrace inflicted upon Bonaparte, who has two powerful enemies in the Directory who fear him, and have so arranged that he should now be removed to a distance. These members of the Directory are Rewbell and La Révellière-Lepaux.'

The Plan of Defence

When the Grand Master received the despatch, he was visibly perturbed, as will be seen, but openly expressed his disbelief in the warning it contained. If there were to be a hostile attack, he placed every confidence in the preparations for defence made by the Congregation of War.

This body, said Doublet, consisted of 'men full of zeal, but nearly all lacking the necessary vision'. They had already, in 1792, perfected a plan of defence submitted to them by the Bailli de Tigné, but it was based on principles of an 'Active defence of the Islands' laid down in 1716 and again in 1761 by French engineers who had been brought to Malta to advise the Order. The Congregation of War had persisted in this scheme and, without any regard to the changed conditions, determined to defend all the accessible points of the coast and to oppose any landing.

A plan of the time shows forty-four anchorages, or places, where troops might disembark, mainly on a line of coast of four leagues, from the western point of Gozo round the northern coast to Valletta, and on to the east at Marsa Scirocco Harbour. This line was protected by no less than sixty-six towers or batteries.

To allow the troops, defending this coastline and the towers, to retreat if they could not resist invasion, a long line of entrenchments, with a wall five feet wide, ran for several miles across the Island, on a chain of hills through Nasciar. Valletta and the Eastern casals were thus divided from Città Vecchia and the western parts of the country.

The Order had, therefore, it will be seen, a War-Book, and instructions were printed and distributed to the Commands, from which it would appear that if the enemy succeeded in landing, the Knights were to withdraw to Valletta, and were to be prepared to sustain a siege.

The chief engineer officer, Tousard, had never approved of this plan, and had repeatedly explained to the Congregation of War that for its success more artillery and gunners were necessary and better trained troops of line. He had even protested to the late Grand Master de Rohan, in a curious scene, and had wished to resign his command, but was not allowed to do so. He had advised concentration on the defence of the city and fortress. The Congregation of War had not considered, he said, that their scheme would expose their altogether inadequate forces to being cut off in retreat, taken or lost, without leaving sufficient reserves for the defence of Valletta and the Three Cities.

A Dress Rehearsal

A full-dress rehearsal, indeed, of the scheme of 'active defence', with the available forces, had recently taken place.

This had arisen in the following way. On 24 February of this year, a French squadron under Admiral Brueys, *en route* for Corfu, had stopped before Malta ostensibly to ask for repairs for one of the vessels. This they obtained.

On its appearance, the Congregation of War had ordered throughout the Islands a general mobilization, which was completed within five hours. For eight days, while the French ships remained in view, the Knights and soldiers stayed at their posts. Special practices were held in methods of repelling the enemy ships by a fire of burning straw, and hasty efforts to drill more men intensively for the Militia were made. The Grand Master showed, on this occasion, a marked activity. He toured Malta, and Gozo too, it would seem, to encourage the soldiers and the people to stand firm ; and so pleased was he with the arrangements that he spoke of presenting the silver sword, which as Commander-in-Chief he had worn during his tour of inspection, to his 'Capo Maestro', Montagna. He also ordered extra pay for the troops in a special issue of coins from the Mint, to be defrayed out of his personal funds.

Preparations for a defence on these lines had thus been made when the despatch from Rastadt arrived. It was sent to the French Secretariat to be decoded. Doublet, writing to the Bailli de Litta, on 6 June, describes the consternation with which he and the worthy Commander de Royer deciphered and read it.

Royer's Advice

Both Royer and Doublet had long mistrusted the system of defence on which the Congregation of War relied. They now felt so strongly on the matter that they decided, in view of the warning contained in the despatch, to draw up a memorandum of their views to be submitted to the Grand Master at the same time as the despatch which they were decoding. The document hastily written by them was as follows :

'*Mémoire pour Son Altesse Eminentissime*'

'After the despatch which His Eminence has just read, it appears certain that we shall be attacked ; but even if it were not so, the dishonour with which you are menaced makes it no less imperative for you yourself to undertake the care of the defence, not on the coasts of the Isles, as the Congregation of War wish, but only in the Citadel and the forts which surround it, by commanding to enter there, quickly and without confusion, all the population of the countryside, with their valuables, beasts, and garnered grain. If the Citadel is not attacked, they will return to their homes, and receive an indemnity ; if it is attacked, they will defend themselves courageously to the last extremity.

'Then, if they have the misfortune to succumb, this will be *with honour* and after having done their duty ; but if, on the contrary, they have the good fortune to force the enemy to retire from these shores, the greatest triumph, here and in all Europe, will be a just recompense for the noble efforts of His Eminence and of all his Knights and his faithful subjects.'

Royer then took the decoded message and the *mémoire* to the Grand Master. He began by telling him that the despatch from Rastadt contained the worst possible news for the Order and handed it to him.

'Is it possible!' cried the Prince, when he had read it, stupefied.

'It is yet very fortunate,' replied Royer, 'that Your Eminence is warned of it in time to take proper measures to repulse this unjust attack.'

'What measures ?' replied the Prince. 'Haven't they been decided on a long time ago ?'

'Yes, Monseigneur, but do you think them sufficient for the salvation of the country and the Order ?'

'Well, what more do you want done ?'

'I want, Monseigneur, that you confine the attack to the town only and to the forts which surround it; that all the peasants be called in with their harvests and their valuables and that they be armed so that in case of need they can be sent to the different posts in the fortifications where their reinforcement might be considered useful. Finally, I want to see Your Eminence in person undertake the post of Commander-in-Chief of the whole defence, because, Monseigneur, you cannot ignore the fact of imminent danger, and the presence of the chief would reanimate dwindling spirits and would revive again in the Knights themselves the old courage which made them do such wonderful deeds of valour under the Grand Masters d'Aubusson, Villiers-de-l'Isle-Adam, and La Vallette, and would oblige each one to do his duty nobly.'

'You speak like an angel, my dear Commander, but have you reflected well on the consequences which would result from your project, if, after I had commanded the execution of it, the inhabitants of the country should refuse to obey it? I go further, if they should, once in the city, turn against us, what could we do then? Could we, with the six or seven hundred Knights that we have, bring them back to reason?'

'But, Monseigneur, that is to push their defiance too far, it seems to me, and I prefer to think that these good people will defend you well and that being, all of them, "chasseurs", they will give the attackers the "fire of hell," when they are behind the walls or on the heights of the ramparts,—the more so when they know that their families are in safety.

'I cannot prevent you believing that,' replied the Prince, 'but for myself I do not believe it at all, and that I think is sufficient reason for me to refuse to undertake any such responsibility.' Royer, during this conversation, had handed the *mémoire* to the Grand Master, who read it and terminated the interview in the foregoing words.

When he saw the old Commander about to retire disconsolate, the Grand Master commanded him 'for the love of God to speak of this to no one whatever and keep the despatch from Rastadt the most profound secret'—flattering himself that the warning which it gave would not be verified. Royer recounted all this to Doublet. 'I still recall with emotion,' writes Doublet, 'the terrible passion into which this put me, and I gave the Grand Master epithets little honourable, which later on he unhappily justified fully: notwithstanding, after some moments' reflection, in the hope that I could change this weak prince's feelings, I told the Commander I would try to see the Grand Master. So I went up and found him with his eyes red, a look distraught and the pallor of fear on his countenance.'

'What news is there now?' he asked me fearfully. 'Have you not seen Royer?'

'Pardon, Monseigneur, I have seen him. He is in despair at the little attention which you have paid to the despatch from Rastadt; he told me how he wasted his time in making wise proposals to Your Eminence, and I have come, I frankly admit, to try if I can succeed better than he in persuading Your Eminence that there is no other course to take. If you have at heart the saving of Malta and the Order, you must be ready to perish with honour in defending them to the last extremity.'

'You believe, then, we shall be attacked?'

'According to this despatch which confirms the numerous counsels which Your Eminence has received from all sides, we must expect it, and prepare ourselves for every eventuality, so as not to be taken unawares.'

'That is the business of the Congregation of War and not mine.'

'Allow me, Monseigneur, to think otherwise and respectfully to point out to you, that in such circumstances, being Head of the Order, you must personally defend not the coast of the whole Island but the interior of the citadel of Malta and its forts which make it appear to be *impregnable*. It is the "place" and not the coasts which the despatch from Rastadt regards as such; it is, therefore, in that "place", that we must shut ourselves up with the defenders and all the means that the interior of the Island affords; it is believed that it is in that "place" you will be able to resist *at least for three months*. The harvest is happily over; so, Monseigneur, command that all the peasants bring it to safety in the town, with their wives, their children, their beasts. . . .'

The priests, too, Doublet suggested, should be invoked to co-operate, and through them an assurance given to the people that they would receive compensation for their losses.

'And you would,' asked Hompesch, 'rely on these people?'

'Much more, Monseigneur, they must be given arms and be posted in the fortifications, to repel the enemy, if they try an assault.'

'And if they should turn against us instead of defending us . . . ?'

'They will not dare; will you not have for hostages their wives, their children and their old people? Besides, you can place them under martial law, and make them march under the flag of the Urban Militia in the battalions in which they will be incorporated. . . .'

A Language Difficulty

The Grand Master saw another difficulty in this, that of language:

'What laws, what discipline,' he asked, 'if they don't understand Italian?' . . .

Doublet suggested interpreters. . . .

'All that is easily said, but impossible to execute without confusion and danger at first. I frankly admit I will listen to nothing as regards such a defence, and I repeat I should have no faith in your peasants.'

'But, Monseigneur,' replied Doublet, 'you need not enter into these minor details, it would suffice that you order and set down the principal dispositions, and name as chiefs for their execution persons whose capabilities and fidelity are known to you, and make them responsible to you for the strict obedience of those under arms. When Your Highness shall have taken a firm resolution in this respect you will inform the Sacred Council in writing, in customary terms, which I, with your First Auditor, will draft, as also the principal rules to be made for the maintenance of good discipline amongst the troops and militia, for the housing of the peasants in the town, and for good order to be observed in case of assault or bombardment. . . .'

'What assault? What bombardment? Get that out of your head.'

'Monseigneur, you know it means *your honour*; the despatch from Rastadt tells it to you plainly; and now or never is the time to apply the maxim: *Si vis pacem, para bellum*. Therefore, we must not let ourselves be overtaken. If the enemy comes, he will find us ready to repel him and he will surely reflect before attacking us. Supposing he does attack us, we will defend ourselves with honour, as is our duty. If, on the contrary, he passes without stopping, each one of us will disarm and return home with the glorious satisfaction of having shown ourselves faithful to our Prince and of being judged worthy to co-operate in saving our country.'

'All that is very nice, but it seems to me, my dear Doublet, that your brain is somewhat obsessed with these imaginings and with your project. Believe me, don't let us rely too much on the Maltese. Pray God we be not attacked; and, whatever happens, rely with confidence on the plan adopted by the Congregation of War and by the Sacred Council. As for me, I repeat, I rely on it absolutely.'

'So saying,' Doublet concludes, 'the Grand Master left me and went into his private room, and I knew I should gain nothing by following him.'

That Hompesch had some reason for his reiterated mistrust of the Maltese people may be gathered from Doublet's own words as to the state of their feelings at this juncture:

'The country folk were nearly all simple, ignorant, and credulous, but sober and laborious, tilling their land and living frugally, much attached to their religion and practising it, but from the stories of the Revolution reaching them, believing that the French soldiers were ferocious beasts. This belief had a curious effect. The mention of the French Army, whom they were now to see for the first time, struck terror into their souls. "If they were Turks," they said, "they would not fear them, but they had always been told that the French were devils, what else could they do but fear them?" This they had been taught by their pastors, declares Doublet, and they crossed themselves, as he himself saw them do many times, when they mentioned this army.

'The inhabitants of the towns, Valletta, the Three Cities, and Pinto City near the Marsa, were less credulous. There, the Militia companies were formed largely from artisans, porters, and boatmen, and other young men over eighteen years of age, who were put through regular weekly drills. This training, indeed, they had to undergo for three or four years, yet their morale was bad. They were drilled by a Knight, and the hour was unfortunately that after dinner on Sunday. The toilers of the week were then tired and liked to go to their cafés. Their parents, too, hated the idea of military service, which they considered brutalizing. Many, therefore, absented themselves from duty. In addition, the instructions were indifferent and generally given by French Knights in many cases out of sympathy with these working men who, they feared, were infected with revolutionary ideas. Furthermore, the cramping space of the ramparts made movement difficult. The orders were given in Frenchified Italian and the young Maltese citizens laughed loudly at them, speaking to one another in their own Maltese tongue which few of the Knights understood. Discipline consequently suffered.'

The womenfolk, too, were full of fears. Doublet's wife, a Maltese lady, came one day and asked : 'Is it true that these "carmagnoles" eat young children ?' 'Yes,' said her husband drily, 'alive, and crunch them like apples.'

CHAPTER III

THE FRENCH FLEET BEFORE MALTA

The French Fleet before Malta—The Landing of the French—Surrender of Notabile—At S. Paul's Bay—The Taking of Gozo—Other Defences

ON the morning of Saturday, June 9, 1798, the main body of the French Fleet appeared before Malta, on the north-west horizon. Seven days later, Doublet writes in a letter to his friend, the Bailli de Virieu, still at Lausanne, the words 'Malta belongs no more to the Order'. In this remarkable letter he describes the taking of Malta by Bonaparte, and with its help and that of his subsequent notes of interviews with the principal actors, we give, in this and the following chapters, an account of the event:

Never before had so large a fleet been seen in the waters of Malta. All the population went on to the terraces of their houses or on to the bastions to see, slowly rising on the skyline, a forest of masts which soon covered the whole sea. The Knights standing below Fort S. Elmo seemed petrified with fear, as if they gazed upon the head of Medusa. This fear fell upon all. All faces showed stupor, dismay, and consternation. Yet we were by no means certain from their appearance that they came as enemies.

The frigates, in one of which, the *Orient*, was the General-in-Chief, sailed at half a cannon's shot from the coast, some rounding Valletta to Marsa Scirocco, to take up their assigned positions. The soldiers on the numberless transports showed no sign of hostile preparations, though they could see the countryside artillery at their guns, with their matches burning, and only awaiting the orders of their officers to open fire.

At about 4 o'clock in the afternoon Bonaparte entered a corvette and sailed again at about half a cannon's shot along the eastern coast, to observe more closely the batteries of the Order, and he could be seen with glass in hand silently regarding each point. He stopped within a quarter shot of Valletta and a pinnace was lowered. It entered the Grand Harbour and reached the mole of the Public Health office, but was met, it seems, on the way by Poussielgue, the captain of the port, in his own boat.

In the pinnace was a French officer, a naval cadet, who bore a letter for the French Consul at Malta, Caruson. The letter was concise. It was an order from the General-in-Chief, written by the Major-General Berthier, charging the Citizen Caruson '*to go and ask, in the name of the General-in-Chief Bonaparte, of "Son Excellence Monsieur le Grand Maistre" an entrance into the Port for the whole French Fleet which had the greatest necessity for such entry, having been at sea for twenty-two days*'.

Caruson went to the palace and presented this letter himself to the Grand Master.

The Grand Master, already overcome by the sight of this great fleet, now seemed overwhelmed by the demand in the letter—so much so, writes Doublet, 'that from this moment he completely lost his head, as his subsequent conduct too well proved'.

'You know well,' he said to Caruson, 'that only four vessels of war of each belligerent nation can enter the port at one time, and consequently I cannot entertain such a demand.'

Caruson begged him to consider the matter very seriously, and to procure for him a categorical reply in writing which he might be able to carry to the General-in-Chief of the French army.

To this the Grand Master replied that he would refer the matter to the Council, and dismissed Caruson.

The Grand Master appears then to have consulted privately with his auditor Bruno, the Maltese, upon the situation, after which he hastily summoned the Sacred Council.

Citizen Caruson, while awaiting a decision, expressed his opinion to his friends Royer and Doublet, painting the request of General Bonaparte in its true aspect, or at least from his standard of loyalty to the Republic. He said the Order ought to give him the required permission to prevent and forestall the trouble which a refusal would entail, and all the disastrous results. He begged them to do all that could be done to get the Sacred Council to receive the demand as that of one friendly Power to another and so remove every scintilla of reason for the General-in-Chief's using the great forces which he had in his command.

The tone of Caruson's remarks evidently made an impression upon his hearers.

It is to be noted here that Royer and Doublet change their advice to the Grand Master. They no longer counsel resistance, and the defence of the 'impregnable fortress'. Apparently the actual arrival on the spot of this mighty fleet had convinced them that resistance was hopeless and impelled them to temporizing calculations. Hompesch's vacillations in the crisis, starting with an apparent readiness to fight and an evident knowledge that the expedition had come to seize the Island, make a curious study.

We resume our account of events as given in Doublet's narrative.

Royer, after his talk with Caruson, saw the Grand Master and sought to tell him of the Consul's friendly advice. 'Though the Knights,' he said, 'were ready for defence, try to avoid any attack which would bring injury to the Maltese and to the Order in their property and their persons.'

The Grand Master in a difficulty demurred, pleading the danger of breaking his neutrality and of allowing inside a vast fleet and a great army, whose good intentions were not known.

'Perhaps,' suggested Royer with simplicity, 'Bonaparte does not know that his demand is unconstitutional? Let us state the case in grave representations. . . .'

At this point the Master of the Horse, Rouyer, told the Grand Master that the Sacred Council had assembled and Hompesch, accompanied by the Commander Royer, passed into the Council Chamber.

No very detailed account remains of the discussion which ensued at this momentous meeting, one of the last to be held in Malta of the Sacred Council.[1] What happened within the Council Chamber was apparently this:

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[1] The Minute Book of the Sacred Council is on this date, Saturday, 9th June, 1798, a blank—though the Council remained for the three days of Saturday, Sunday, and Monday in a sort of continuous session. The attendance was, however, small: many of the members were at their posts in the field, some were ill, one was too old to attend, and others, it has been said, found it convenient to absent themselves.

The Vice-Chancellor was the Secretary to the Council. The 'brogliardi' or notes, if any, which he may have taken of the proceedings are not to be found. Historians who have described these scenes have had, in consequence, to depend upon contemporary letters and Memoirs for information or upon the official protests and other statements issued, after the loss of Malta, by the Grand Master Hompesch and his followers, and by his opponents the 'schismatic' Knights, or upon the writings of the French and Maltese authorities present at the time.

The last entry in the Minutes of the Sacred Council is dated 1st June, 1798. The establishment of the new Russian Langue had just been completed. The record reads that:

> 'A cross of brilliants be awarded with their unanimous pleasure to the Venerable Bali Fra Guillo Renato Conte Litta at S. Petersburg in recognition of his incomparable zeal, intelligence, and activity in concluding the negotiations with Russia.'

Immediately on entering the Chamber, the Grand Master, not attempting in the least to explain in any favourable way, as a friendly request, the demand for the *aiguade*,[1] announced it as a *stratagem* by which the *enemy* probably hoped to seize Malta by surprise; and told them 'that he had thought it his duty to refuse Caruson's request, but as he had been asked to bring it before the Sacred Council he could not quite refuse to do so'. He concluded by asking them 'to read the letter and consider both his further reply to it for which M. Caruson was waiting and also the course which the circumstances called for them to take for their own safety'.

In so speaking, writes Doublet, Hompesch displayed a 'discouraging consternation'. By putting the worst complexion upon Bonaparte's request, he hardened the position against the Order. The Council was composed of old men, ancient baillis who would not recognize the new Republic, but the Grand Master knew the realities of the situation more fully than they, and he could possibly have persuaded them to accommodate Bonaparte on diplomatic grounds, so as not to drive him into direct hostilities. Hompesch does not, however, appear to have contributed to the debate.

The Bailli de Pennes quoted the neutrality required by the thirteenth Article of the Treaty of Utrecht, by which the entry into the port of belligerent vessels was limited to four at a time. 'Let the Grand Master,' he said, 'spare himself the trouble of bringing the Council together and hold fast to this point!'

Nearly all the members of the Council had agreed to this standpoint when one old man, Vargas, a Spanish Knight, with greater vision raised his voice in protest. He was the 'Luogotenente' of the Langue of Castile, and his King was at peace with France.

'To aid France,' he said, 'as a neutral power is our only hope, for Spain is the ally of France. . . .'

At the word 'ally' a wave of opposition arose. Vargas was interrupted with cries of 'Jacobin', 'democrat', and other abusive terms. He was not daunted, however, and replied with spirit to the invectives.

'What shall we do if Bonaparte, angered at a refusal, seizes Malta, and puts us all out? I am far from wishing that, but if God permits him to do so, and punishes you, I shall always have a Commandery in Spain in which to pass the rest of my days!'

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[1] Water for ships.

The Council did not reply to Vargas, but unanimously rejected the demand of Bonaparte, on the basis that there was a decree of their Council, of the year 1768, which prevented the admittance of more than four vessels at a time.

The Council then separated without taking any heed of the second matter, the consideration of measures for their safety in the emergency, upon which the Grand Master had asked them to deliberate. Can it be that in suggesting this subject Hompesch had half in mind to raise, even at the eleventh hour, the alternative plan of defence put up to him by Tousard and his French Secretaries in their recent memorandum?

The French Consul returned to learn their decision. The Grand Master received him in a stiff manner and informed him that they stood upon their old decree which had at the time been communicated to all the Powers, including France, having relations with the Order. Caruson, on hearing this, repeated his request to have the answer in writing. This Hompesch declined on the grounds that it would not be customary, as the original letter was not directed to him, but to Caruson.

Caruson appealed at length and with emotion against the refusal, depicting to Hompesch their danger, common to the Order, to Malta, and to his own family. Finding he spoke without avail, he said he would be forced to go on board the flagship and tell the General-in-Chief exactly what he had been told by the Grand Master and of the tone in which he had been addressed.

'You are your own master,' replied Hompesch coldly, 'and free to go!'

Caruson, 'trembling and in consternation, more dead than alive', then left the palace for the French flagship.

* * *

The decision of the Council and the abrupt departure of Caruson were quickly known in Valletta and the Three Cities. It was now after six o'clock and a Saturday evening, when the streets and cafés were usually filled to overflowing, and Maltese citizens, rich and poor, gathered at their doors and windows to enjoy the cooler air and indulge, in true southern fashion, in conversation with their neighbours. The political crisis had given an ample subject for discussion and Doublet has told of the criticisms levelled against the inept chefs of the Order on all sides. All considered it madness to have allowed Caruson thus to depart in so uncompromising a fashion. Each had his own ideas of what might have been done and Doublet himself, we may imagine, must have been far from silent with regard to an ingenious suggestion of his. He had proposed to Royer that all the Maltese ships and boats in the harbours should be requisitioned by the Grand Master, filled with the necessary supplies of water, and sent out to the French fleet. An immediate conflict might thus have been averted, and time would have been gained.

No one knew what would happen next. All feared a night attack in some form or other.

Caruson, on arrival on the flagship, reported to General Bonaparte the manner in which the request for the entry of the French Fleet had been received by the Grand Master and his Council, and, having done so, asked to be allowed to return to Valletta before the gates were closed, that he might see his wife and children were put in safety. Bonaparte would not allow him to do so.

'They must look after them well,' he said, 'if they do not, the Grand Master will be responsible to me. He has refused me the *aiguade* for which I asked. Very well, I am going to take it, and we shall see if he knows how to stop me!'

At nine o'clock on that evening Bonaparte decided to launch his long-meditated attack upon Malta and signed the following laconic order:

'A bord de *l'Orient* devant Malte.
le 21 Prairial an VI.
Ordre de partir à minuit, pour exécuter le débarquement conformement aux dispositions du 21. BONAPARTE.'

The admirals and numerous generals were instructed by the Chief of Staff in equally brief terms to begin operations:

'A bord de *l'Orient* le 21 Prairial an VI.
Le Général en Chef étant décidé à attaquer l'île et les possessions de l'Ordre de Malte vous ordonne d'exécuter ponctuellement l'ordre et les dispositions que je vous ai fait passer et dont l'exécution est soumise à la réception du présent ordre. Par ordre du Général en Chef,
(Signé) BERTHIER.'

No further instructions were necessary, for the commanders had already the most detailed instructions as to the landing and attack upon Malta and about a general policy to be adopted when they seized and occupied the Islands. Their orders had been prepared, in some cases, before the fleet left Toulon. These showed on the part of Bonaparte and his higher command the most minute knowledge of the place, its people, and its problems. Some were signed by Bonaparte himself.

Caruson was, at this juncture, ordered by Bonaparte to write the following letter to the Grand Master:

On board *l'Orient*.
22 *Prairial*, an VI (10 June, 1798).

To the Grand Master of the Island of Malta.

EMINENCE,

Having been called on board the flagship as bearer of the reply which your Eminence made to the request that permission might be granted to the fleet to water, I am to state that the Commander-in-Chief, Bonaparte, is indignant to learn that you will not grant such permission except to four vessels at a time—for in effect, what length of time would be required under such circumstances to water and victual 500 to 600 sail? This refusal has surprised General Bonaparte all the more, as he is aware of the favours shown to the English, and also of the proclamation published by your Eminence's predecessor.

General Bonaparte is resolved to obtain by force that which ought to have been accorded him by virtue of the principles of hospitality, the fundamental rule of your Order.

I have seen the considerable forces that are under the orders of General Bonaparte, and I foresee the impossibility of the Order resisting. It would be well if your Eminence in such extreme circumstances, for the love of your Order, your Knights, and the whole population of Malta, might propose some means of concluding an arrangement.

The General will not on any account permit my returning to a city which henceforth he feels obliged to treat as belonging to an enemy, and which can have no hope, except in the sincerity of General Bonaparte, who has given strict orders that the religion, the customs, and the property of the Maltese shall be most scrupulously respected.

By order of the Commander-in-Chief.
(Signed) CARUSON,
French Consul at Malta.

This letter, whether by design or accident, was not received by the Grand Master till six o'clock on the morning of Sunday, 10 June, at a time when most of the enemy troops had landed and their operations to take possession of his small kingdom were well in hand.

The Landing of the French

In accordance with the orders quoted, the French landed at dawn on Sunday, 10 June. The disembarkation commenced at 4 a.m., 40,000 men in all being landed by boats from the ships of the fleet. This took necessarily a considerable time.

As the extent of the resistance, from the fortress or from the plains, could not be foreseen, Bonaparte had utilized this immense force—determined, no doubt, to leave nothing to chance. The generals directing operations were: Regnier, against Gozo; Baraguey d'Hilliers at Melleha and S. Paul's Bay; Desaix at Marsa Scirocco; Vaubois at S. George's and S. Julian's Bay, whence an attack was to be made against Notabile. The younger figures of Marmont and Lannes also appeared upon the scene.

The French forces were supported by guns from the ships of the fleet, brought into suitable positions. Field-pieces and howitzers were landed later at S. Julian's Bay, under General Dommartin in command of the artillery.

The reader may like to know something of the strength of the forces of the Order at this time, and who commanded them.

The Congregation of War consisted of the Baillis Neveu, Souza, La Tour du Pin; the Commanders Bardonnenche, Director of Artillery; Fay, Director of Fortifications; and the Servant d'Armes Tousard, Director of Engineering. Four Commissioners for the Nations were added by the Grand Master: the Baillis Sarrio for Spain, Frisari for Italy, de Pennes for France, and Thöring for Bavaria, with the Commander Bosredon Ransijat as finance officer. Most of these were members of the Sacred Council.

Under this body, the Marshal of the Order, the Bailli de Loras of the Langue of Auvergne, commanded the troops in the field. The Seneschal of the Order, Prince Camille de Rohan, and four Lieutenant-Generals, were next in command.

The forces at their disposal have been variously estimated. The actual Knights present in Malta may be taken to have been

332 in number, divided as follows: French 200, Italian 90, Spanish 25, Portuguese 8, German and Bavarian 5. About 50 were too old for active service, which left about 282 to take the field.

The other forces consisted of:

The Regiment of Malta	500
Grand Master's Guard	200
Soldiers from the Fleet	500
Gunners	400
The Regiment of Cacciatori	1,200
Sailors from the Fleet to serve the guns	1,200
Militia in Towns and Country	13,000
Total	17,000

In the distribution of these forces about 28 separate minor commands were established, each in charge of an individual Knight.

The Navy was commanded by the Admiral of the Order, though subordinate to the Marshal in time of war. An Italian, the Bailli Cambi, was now the Admiral. Under the Admiral, were a General and Lieutenant-Generals of the Galleys, and a Commandant of the war vessels.

The Fleet in 1789 consisted of

4 Galleys
1 Vessel of 60 guns
3 Frigates
2 Corvettes
4 Galiots
1 Tartane

In all, 15 ships.

Two 'Congregations', of the galleys and of the war-vessels, as already noted, directed their internal discipline and economy.

Maltese officers were employed in all branches on land and sea, but in subordinate positions.

The Marshal, the Seneschal, and the Admiral were members of the Sacred Council, and this body remained the supreme authority, retaining control of the forces of the Order.

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The violences, horrors, and romance of war were soon to be experienced for a brief period within the narrow limits of Malta and Gozo.

CITTÀ VECCHIA (OR NOTABILE)

Surrender of Notabile

The surrender of Notabile was, for our story, the most important incident outside Valletta in this short campaign.

General Vaubois landed at S. George's Bay, where he met with little resistance from the Chevalier de Preville commanding the Cacciatori Maltesi, and after other operations marched on Notabile. As this column advanced, the Maltese agent, Vincenzo Barbara, made a dramatic appearance. He was seen to approach the city with a white flag, and he bore a message from Vaubois asking the inhabitants if they were going to fight or surrender.

Their spirit of resistance was not encouraged by the fact that some of the Maltese Militia, under the Bailli La Tour du Pin, had already arrived in disorder at Notabile, whither they fled for safety on being driven from S. Paul's Bay and Melleha by General Baraguey d'Hilliers.

At the Bishop's palace were assembled in a council of war the Capitano di Verga, three Jurats, the Archbishop Labini, and one Romualdo Barbaro, on behalf of the citizens.

As they could make no effective resistance, it was resolved to surrender the city to the French, provided they could secure that their religion, their liberty, and their property would be respected and the safety of public institutions guaranteed. The terrible tales of the French Revolution were still in their minds! These conditions were granted. A capitulation followed, and the Capitano di Verga delivered the keys of the city to General Vaubois.

A document was then signed in the Bishop's palace recording the event, which included the names of:

Vincenzo Barbara representing Bonaparte and the Republic, on the one part: and the authorities of the city on the other: Gregorio Bonici, the Governor of the city; Salvadore Manduca, Ferdinando Teuma, Salvadore Tabone, the Jurats; Romualdo Barbaro, on behalf of the people.

It was now about midday, and the pact was cemented by hospitality offered to Vaubois and his staff at the Bishop's table in the palace.

At S. Paul's Bay

Baraguey d'Hilliers in reporting that his troops had captured all the forts, batteries, and positions which defended the Bays of S. Paul and of Melleha, stated:

'The Maltese had defended themselves as far as lay in their power, but all had to cede before the audacity and intelligence of the attack.'

The Taking of Gozo

Gozo put up a stouter defence. Here there was a garrison of nearly 2,300 men. Calms and contrary breezes had delayed the landing of General Regnier until one o'clock. The batteries of the Order on Ramla and the New Tower opened fire, and against this the French troops had to scale the heights. Two ships, *Etoile* and *Plouvier*, were placed in position to silence these batteries. Fort Chambray was then attacked, and Rabato itself. The Gozitans at length surrendered, their commander, the Chevalier Mesgriny, deserting them.

A judge was appointed by the inhabitants to treat with Regnier. The French General told them in French that honourable terms of surrender would be given—but no one of the Maltese party understanding that language, the capitulation was settled in a laconic Latin sentence : '*Honores, proprietates et Religionem habent maiora*'.

Other Defences

The Bailli Tommasi, one of the four Lieutenant-Generals and later to be Grand Master, held at first the lines of Nasciar, but was soon driven back on Valletta.

Fort Ricasoli was held by the Bailli de Clugny, another Lieutenant-General.

The Seneschal, the Prince Camille de Rohan, made a final stand with Floriana as his headquarters.

Fort Tignè was defended bravely by the courageous Bailli Reichberg of the Anglo-Bavarian Langue and his Maltese Cacciatori, Fort Manoel likewise by the Baillis Gurgao and La Tour Saint Quentin.

Features of the fighting included ambushes by the French, as at Marsa Scirocco ; and great agility on the part of the Maltese in jumping over the walls, taking cover, and then firing upon the enemy and other curious items which may be read in the reports of the French generals.

Instances were reported of the unworthy conduct of some of the Knights, who were accused of signalling to the enemy or of surrendering without firing a shot from their guns. The truth of such matters must remain for the historical experts to decide.

Powder and ammunition were not properly distributed at some points. They were brought up from Cottonera by volunteers under the Chevalier La Tour du Pin. They were hampered in their operations by the hostility of certain Maltese who conveniently lost the mules and the carts or other means of transport just when they were required. In Valletta, the Director of Artillery refused, it was said, to issue the necessary supplies to certain troops on a critical occasion.

On the other hand, the Chevalier de Montferret found himself in charge of a Maltese company at the Molo della Sanità, and here were moored several Greek barques. Their crews were suspected of aiding the French fleet, and an attack was made upon them by the Maltese still loyal to the Order.

A solitary naval action, if such a desperate venture can be so called, marked the hostilities.

To prevent the egress of the enemy Bonaparte had blocked the entrance of the Grand Harbour with four ships—amongst them, it may be noted, the *Franklin*, from which, it is to be hoped, the ‘ savants ’ had been removed at an earlier stage.

Between eleven and twelve o’clock at noon the Chevalier de Soubiras sailed out of the Grand Harbour with one galley, two galiots, and an armed shallop. These vessels fired briskly on the shallops employed in landing the enemy, one of which they sank. They also succeeded in sinking a French gunboat. The artillery at Fort S. Elmo and Fort Tignè, which at first gave support to the Chevalier in his attack, having ceased fire, the vessels of the Order were forced to return to port.

We must turn to consider the events which occurred within the City of Valletta simultaneously with these engagements without the walls.

CHAPTER IV

IN VALLETTA DURING THE OPERATIONS

A Blow from Within—The Murder of Eynaud—A Faithful Staff—A Dissatisfied Soldier—The Maltese People force a hearing—Hompesch flies the White Flag—A Curious Scene—The Prerogative of the Grand Master

WHAT was happening on this Sunday morning within Valletta while the French were landing and the operations described in the previous chapter were in progress?

The command of the troops of the Order in Valletta belonged as of right to the 'Marshal', and the Bailli de Loras held this office. The bastions and 'cavaliers' were served by Knights not elsewhere required who relieved each other and mounted guard by turns: these, under the Commander Caamano and the Chevaliers Desbrull and Ascona, were intended as a *corps d'élite* to fly to any danger-point.

Continual firing had been heard from dawn from the batteries of the Order on the coasts, and also from those of the city itself, attempting to stop the landing of the enemy.

Couriers from the coasts and the country came into the city at intervals with news of the advance and successes of the French, thus adding to the dismay and consternation.

The Grand Master stayed all this time inside the Palace, attended in turn by the Auditor Bruno, the Maître Ecuyer Rouyer and the Chamberlain Ligondez. The Sacred Council was assembled with him and remained in permanent session. No steps were taken to allay the increasing fears of the people. All the Knights not on duty had gathered in the apartments of the palace, where they spoke to one another so fearfully that it seemed as if the enemy had already attacked the town. But Bonaparte had not intended to do so, save in the last resort, and Valletta escaped both a bombardment and the entry of an enemy force during the hostilities. No doubt the General, respecting its powers of resistance, had realized what it would have cost him, if the Knights had determined to defend it to the last. The artillery that he actually landed was only used to support the troops on the plains.

Caruson's letter arrived, we have mentioned, at six o'clock.

The information it contained for the Grand Master was superfluous. Hompesch could now see for himself, if he had not already known, Bonaparte's intentions.

A Blow from Within

At seven o'clock, another letter was received by Hompesch, by which a blow was dealt to the Order from within. It was from the Knight Bosredon Ransijat, the Secretary of the Treasury, and in the following terms:

YOUR HIGHNESS,

In the extreme affliction in which I am placed, owing to the misfortune, amidst many others, which our Order has now to face, and as a war with France would be a calamity certainly greater than all others, I consider it my duty to represent to your Highness, with that frankness which I claim to be characteristic, that when I became by vow a member of our Institution, I did not contract any other military obligation beyond that of warring against the Turks, our constitutional enemies. I could never contemplate fighting against my native country, to which, by duty, as well as by feeling, I am, and ever shall be, as firmly attached as I am to our Order.

Finding myself, therefore, in this critical and painful dilemma, for on whichever side I declare myself, I shall be considered at fault by the other, I beg Your Highness will not take it amiss if I observe the strictest neutrality, and hereby beg you will be pleased to appoint a member of our Order to whom I may deliver the keys of the Treasury, and at the same time assign to me a place of residence. I have the honour, &c.

(Signed) BOSREDON RANSIJAT,
Secretary of the Treasury.[1]

The counter-revolutionaries had, indeed, insinuated in the mind of Hompesch a grave fear as to treachery amongst his own Knights and had even, a few days before the invasion, handed the Grand Master a list of suspected individuals, wishing him to arrest them. In this list was, with others of his intimate friends, the name of Ransijat. Whatever his inmost feelings with regard to the others may have been, the Grand Master declined to act in relation to Ransijat, and expressed his faith in him.

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[1] It is curious to note that the Chevalier Bosredon Ransijat had received, before the French landed, a letter from his friend the Chevalier Dolomieu, from the *Franklin*, in which he was assured of the peaceful intentions of General Bonaparte.

When, however, Hompesch received this letter he feared that this was a preconcerted signal to start a plot from within, and discussed, at length, the loyalty of Ransijat with his Master of the Horse (Rouyer) who had brought the letter. As a result he ordered Ransijat to be placed under arrest in charge of the Chevalier Pfiffer. This Swiss Knight was not at all on friendly terms with Bosredon Ransijat and actually locked him in a cell in the Castle of S. Angelo.

From now on, in all the areas, in Valletta and in the Three Cities, and in the country, confusion reigned. A multitude of rumours true and false spread from person to person. Plots were spoken of, and plots were, in fact, afoot.

It was said that the Chief Engineer Officer Tousard was secretly helping the French, that the Chevalier de Preville at Marsa Scirocco had been seen openly making signals to the enemy when landing and, at a later stage, that Bonaparte himself had landed and met some Knights in a country house.

The bad staff work of the Congregation of War was seen in the condition of many of the guns in the batteries. The bores of some of them had become worm-eaten and they blew to pieces when fired, an annual coat of paint having maintained an exterior appearance of fitness. Others of them were found to have no ramrods. Supplies for a defence were insufficient at many of the forts. There were neither rifles nor ammunition nor enough shot for the guns. In some cases in the coast towers only the blank charges used on feast days and for ceremonial salutes could be found.

An incident arose at Burmola, where a Maltese contingent mutinied against their officers when they discovered that the cartridges supplied to them failed to fire. They ascribed this to the fact that charcoal had been substituted for the powder by their officers, the Knights, and believed themselves thus betrayed by Republican treachery. The failure of the cartridges was really due to inherent defects. In the dispute arising some officers threatened the men with the galleys, but they were themselves attacked and two of them murdered.

The soldiers of the company then dragged another officer to Valletta. Here they were stopped by the guard at Porta Reale, where one of them stabbed the Knight on duty. They then entered the city and clamoured outside the palace for the trial of their officer as a traitor. The doors and windows of the palace were now closed, and shots were fired indiscriminately by the soldiers within, upon all who appeared on the adjoining squares.

The people of the city, most of whom were armed, surged into the streets and denounced the Grand Master and the French Knights.

The Archbishop with all the clergy, regular and secular, except those of the Order, who were (writes Doublet) ‘ less devout ’, formed a procession, and reciting prayers suitable for such calamities, carried through the streets of Valletta the famous statue of S. Paul. Thus it was that the Saint ‘ came out ’, as the Maltese called it, in the time of stress or jubilation. Several Knights, who stood by spectators of this ceremonial, made derisive remarks and did not remove their hats. These were some of the young French novices. Such was their decadence, which civil war and revolution had not improved. This attitude irritated the Maltese more than ever against the Order and against the French.

The Murder of Eynaud

While this procession was taking place in the centre of the town, two French marine officials were being brutally massacred in the very same house that had given asylum and refuge to the wife and ten children of Caruson. These were MM. Patot and Eynaud, who were employed, as they had been under the Monarchy, in victualling ships of the French Navy. This is how this tragedy occurred :

Eynaud’s residence was over his shop on the Marina, and it was to his house that Mme Caruson had fled with her ten children on the day that her husband had been detained by Bonaparte, because, the shop being vaulted, she thought she would be safer there than in her own home, from the bombs that it was thought the French army would throw into the town. Another Frenchman named Damas, hat-maker by trade, and friend of Eynaud, had also come there with his wife and four children. Eynaud had ten—so that this reunion was composed of twenty-four children, three mothers of a family, and two men, not counting the servants. The shop, which may still stand, was situated at the port, opposite the Barrière du Bureau de la Santé, where a guard had been placed of about 150 or 200 men, porters of the Customs, or boatmen of the port, commanded by the Commander de Mont-Ferret.

Dinner at Eynaud’s being finished, some of the children and a servant were innocently sent to the balcony : suddenly they heard a great tumult and loud cries from a party of armed men in the street below: 'Here are the b—— French; to hell with them,' said some. 'No, no,' said others, 'we will shoot them down like dogs,' and so saying the assailants presented arms. Seeing this, the servants and children withdrew from the balcony, ran towards the table, where the mothers and fathers were still seated and, in their terror, told them what had just happened to them. Eynaud went without delay to shut the windows of the balcony. Then the patrol mentioned (for it was part of the Guard of the Barrière) called out to him in the Maltese language: 'Come down and open your door . . . *bougres de Carmagnole*, we want to come in and visit your shop where you have hidden arms.'

They then knocked on the door, dealing great blows with the ends of their guns, threatening to break in, if it was not opened to them. The women did not want it opened; on the contrary, they cried to barricade and reinforce it well. Eynaud answered them that, not having arms hidden as they had accused him, he had consequently nothing to fear from a visit, and that rather than appear to disobey and resist an armed force, it would be better to open the door. He then went down, accompanied by Damas; but the door was scarcely open when poor Eynaud was stabbed with bayonets, and struck to the ground by blows of butt-ends of guns, and Damas, who wished to rescue him from the hands of this mob of ruffians, was killed by the cut of a sabre; they cut off the latter's head, which, with his body, they threw into the sea.

Then, having entered the shop, some of them massacred some slaves whose ransom had been paid to the Treasury of the Order and who were waiting to embark for Tunisia, their country; others forced the desk of Eynaud and pillaged all the silver and papers that they found there. Then they were about to go up to the apartments of the women and children who already were crying out for mercy, when happily another patrol, detached from the same outpost but officered by a chivalrous man, came up unexpectedly, and had this frightful brigandage stopped. He even wanted to arrest those who had committed it, but his troop was not numerous enough, and they retired in spite of him to their Commander to whom they told what they had seen. This Commander has been generally blamed, some have even thought him a particular enemy of Eynaud; so, at least, he appeared from his indifference to this double assassination and from his not having had those who were the authors of it arrested or punished, and the stolen silver and other effects given back. He did not even take steps to prevent similar crimes being committed again.

Meanwhile, when the assassins had departed, they wished to take away Eynaud who had remained on the doorstep bathed in his own blood,—a corpse as they thought. Seeing that he showed signs of life, his family implored with great cries that they would leave him to be bathed and cared for; but they cruelly refused this, and without listening to anything, took him away, to carry him to the Hospital. When the porters arrived at the gate of the Marina, they laid down their burden for a moment to rest themselves before mounting the steps of the street, but in that moment one of the guards at the gate seized his gun, and with the butt-end of it, barbarously hit Eynaud on the head and knocked in one of his eyes; no one arrested this cowardly scoundrel. Finally, when the unfortunate Eynaud arrived at the Hospital, instead of receiving alleviation there, the miserable man, charged with irons by order of the cruel Chevalier de Merigny, had to spend the night in the most horrible sufferings, only to die next morning of his wounds.[1]

A Faithful Staff

On this Sunday afternoon, when the situation in the city was growing worse, Doublet stood by in his secretariat in the palace. Hompesch, with a personal solicitude for his faithful staff, sent a message to Doublet and his French writers to get to their homes before dark, lest, as Frenchmen, they be attacked by the people and suffer the fate of Eynaud.

Doublet asked that they might all be allowed to remain and the Grand Master learnt of the devotion of some of his subordinates. It appeared that the clerks in the Palace had enrolled themselves in a volunteer company, under the command of the Vice-Chamberlain, the Chevalier de Gondecourt, and were ready with arms in their hands to defend the person of their Prince with their lives.

An express order, however, was brought to Doublet by the Chamberlain Ligondez to close the office, and he departed for his house, near the Carmelite Church, not very far from the Palace.

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[1] A grotesque note was struck in the tragedy. The Maltese had come to seek for arms. A toy gun belonging to one of the children was the only weapon they found.

A Dissatisfied Soldier

Here Doublet found on duty, with a rifle in his hand, beneath a statue of the Madonna at the corner of the church, his 'friend, neighbour, and contemporary', the lawyer Torreggiani.

'What are you doing,' asked Doublet, 'are you guarding the Madonna?'

'I know what I am doing,' he replied, 'but I am very much afraid that the Grand Master doesn't know what *he* is doing!

'They are only firing all the time into the winds—and for what—only to alarm women and children!

'They would be far better engaged if they were seeing if they had sufficient forces to resist a French attack to-night. I think they all lost their heads, Baillis and Knights, as well as the Grand Master, when they refused water to Bonaparte!

'The whole campagna is now taken by the enemy. What could be worse? Do they want them to take the city; do they want us to have our churches profaned, our wives and daughters violated?'

These, and a great many more, were his remarks, as a Maltese, upon the situation. He concluded by saying: It was not worth while sacrificing the Island and its inhabitants for a handful of Knights, degenerate, impure, who did not know how to defend, govern, or command, and that he would leave the Madonna to her own devices and see what the 'Giurati' were doing.

Reaching home, Doublet found his family distraught with fears for his safety. They had prayed, with all their Maltese fervour, the whole afternoon for his return. When the others went to bed, Doublet could not think of sleep. It was for him, he writes, a night of torment, as he could not learn what was happening at the Council, which he had left in session, nor the course of events in the city.

He went up to his 'terrazzino', and remained there until nearly dawn. From it he could see the sea, the ramparts, the plains and hills of Imrabat. The air was calm, the sky filled with stars and cloudless. The enemy fleet lay in extended positions. No movement, no signal, came from it now, so different from the previous evening when signals flashed continuously as the disembarkation proceeded. The batteries of the Order still fired, wasting powder and shot, and rifle shots were heard in the city, some from the direction of Molino a Vento, where a false alarm of the enemy's entry had been raised.

The whole French army had before nightfall established themselves in a line of circumvallations, from which, later, to invest Valletta and the Three Cities. The doom of these cities seemed inevitable. At length, wearied out, Doublet threw himself on his bed and slept.

He was awakened a little after five o'clock by the arrival of his hairdresser who wished urgently to speak to him. This fellow had come to tell him of the astonishing fact that at Forts Ricasoli and S. Elmo the flag of the Order had just been hauled down and a white flag flown in its place. What was the reason?

Doublet hastened to the palace and learnt that the Grand Master had asked of Bonaparte a truce!

The Maltese People force a hearing

The Grand Master had been forced to take this step by a movement amongst the Maltese in Valletta in which the lawyer Torreggiani, whom we have recently met as a sentry on duty at the Carmelite Church, played an important part. After his conversation with Doublet, on the Sunday evening, true to his word, he had deserted the Madonna and his post and had gone off to the 'Università'. There he found ten or twelve Maltese notables—amongst them the ex-auditor Muscat and the Baron Mario Testaferrata and Guido, the son of a Donat of the Anglo-Bavarian Langue, debating what they could possibly do in the desperate situation.

After a prolonged discussion it was settled, by about ten o'clock on the Sunday evening, to carry a *supplica* to the Grand Master and the Council, to get them to ask the French for a suspension of arms and for a declaration as to whether it was against the *Order* or the *Maltese* that the General-in-Chief was moving his forces? The Consul for Holland, who was asked to intervene, would not assist personally in the presentation of the petition, but offered to register their request in his Chancellery 'to place it on record for future times'.

Four people were therefore chosen from this small collection of self-appointed representatives of the people: Mario Testaferrata, Bonnani, Torreggiani, and Guido. An Auditor Schembri, a Maltese, suggested that the Grand Master should be advised of their intentions, so that they might be favourably received by the Sacred Council, but, afraid himself to approach the Grand Master, offered to get into touch with his colleague Bruno and went off to the Palace to do so. Bruno, called out of attendance at the Council, said he would see to it, and re-entered the Council Chamber. Schembri waited an hour in the Palace without any reply from Bruno. The deputies at the 'Università' grew impatient and went themselves to the Palace. Schembri, whom they found there, told them that he had seen Bruno. He then vanished from the scene.

The party reached the door of the Council Chamber itself and demanded admittance, announcing that they had a petition to present in the name of the whole Maltese nation to His Eminence and the Sacred Council. The Master of the Horse was sent for and explained to them that no one, who was not a member of the Order, could be admitted to the Council Chamber.

The Maltese still crowded about the door, repeating their demand, and made their voices heard within.

Hompesch, trembling, ordered Rouyer to admit them. The members of the deputation advanced to the middle of the room, and bowed profoundly to the Grand Master and the Sacred Council. Guido, on their behalf, speaking in Italian, then said:

'Your Eminent Highness and Sacred Council, we, the deputies appointed in the name of the Maltese nation, in view of the really critical situation, do present and read in this Sacred Council the petition I hold in my hands, demanding that its request may, as it ought, be granted, and expressing at the same time our profound respect for the person of Your Highness and the Sacred Council.'

At this the Grand Master signed to the Vice-Chancellor, the Bailli Caravalho, who told them they could read their statement and then retire.

Guido then read a statement which said that:

> 'The Maltese were proud of having sacrificed fortune, life, and liberty in the service of the Order and the Grand Master, when it was a question of fighting against the Mohammedans, their natural enemies, but seeing that to-day they were attacked by a Christian Power, without knowing why, and by forces against which the Order could not contend—since the whole country had been invaded by a large army who might even this very night take the city by assault, and put it to pillage, they, by the instrument of their very humble deputies, begged the Grand Master very respectfully to prevent this terrible evil by sending to the

General-in-Chief a request for a suspension of arms, until they might learn from him the reason why the French, who had always been friends of the Order and of the Maltese, had declared war upon them.'

The reading of this statement created a stormy scene. It was repeatedly interrupted by invectives and insulting apostrophes from the Knights, but far from being disconcerted, the spokesman, Guido, stood his ground, only raising his voice the more and re-reading the interrupted phrases.

At the end of the discourse the Vice-Chancellor rose and addressed the Maltese:

'Your audacious action ought to be punished, and if I were Grand Master I would have you hanged as you went out of here!'

'They hang thieves and assassins,' replied Guido to the Bailli, 'but they listen to the deputies of a nation which like our own, has nothing to gain and everything to lose by a war like this.' He then appealed to the Grand Master personally 'for their unhappy country'.

The Grand Master assured them that their petition would be considered; the deputation then withdrew, Guido declaring that they would await a reply to take back to the assembly at the Università who had sent them.

Confusion then reigned for an hour and a half in the Sacred Council. To some the action of the Maltese was that of traitors, they had leagued with the fleet, let them be arrested and their papers seized and examined. Some said the safety of the persons of the Grand Master and themselves should be seen to, so let them withdraw into one of the 'cavaliers' by Porta Reale: let all the valuables in S. John's Church and other buildings of the Order be withdrawn into the Conservatoria or some place of safety—for no provision had been made in this respect. The Grand Master betrayed his own fears by asking the Master of the Horse to stand on the balcony to see if there were any fresh movements in the town, and to watch the corridors to see if the Maltese were seeking entry in any numbers into the Palace. Did Hompesch have secret advice of a plot? Who knows? All was, however, reported relatively quiet. No effort seems to have been made to guard the Palace effectively from such intruders.

Some of the Maltese deputation got tired waiting for their reply and went away. Guido and Bonnani remained. Many members of the Sacred Council also went away, worn out for want of sleep.

Hompesch flies the White Flag

At this stage, word reached the Sacred Council that two young Knights at the Fort of Cottonera had been killed by some Maltese soldiers to whom they had spoken abusively in giving an order, and this news may have decided the Grand Master to urge a suspension of arms. Hompesch now thought that if they did not hasten to ask a suspension of arms all the Knights would thus perish one by one. This fear communicated itself to the few remaining members of the Council and they decided to ask, in a letter from the Grand Master to Bonaparte, for a suspension of arms and nothing more.

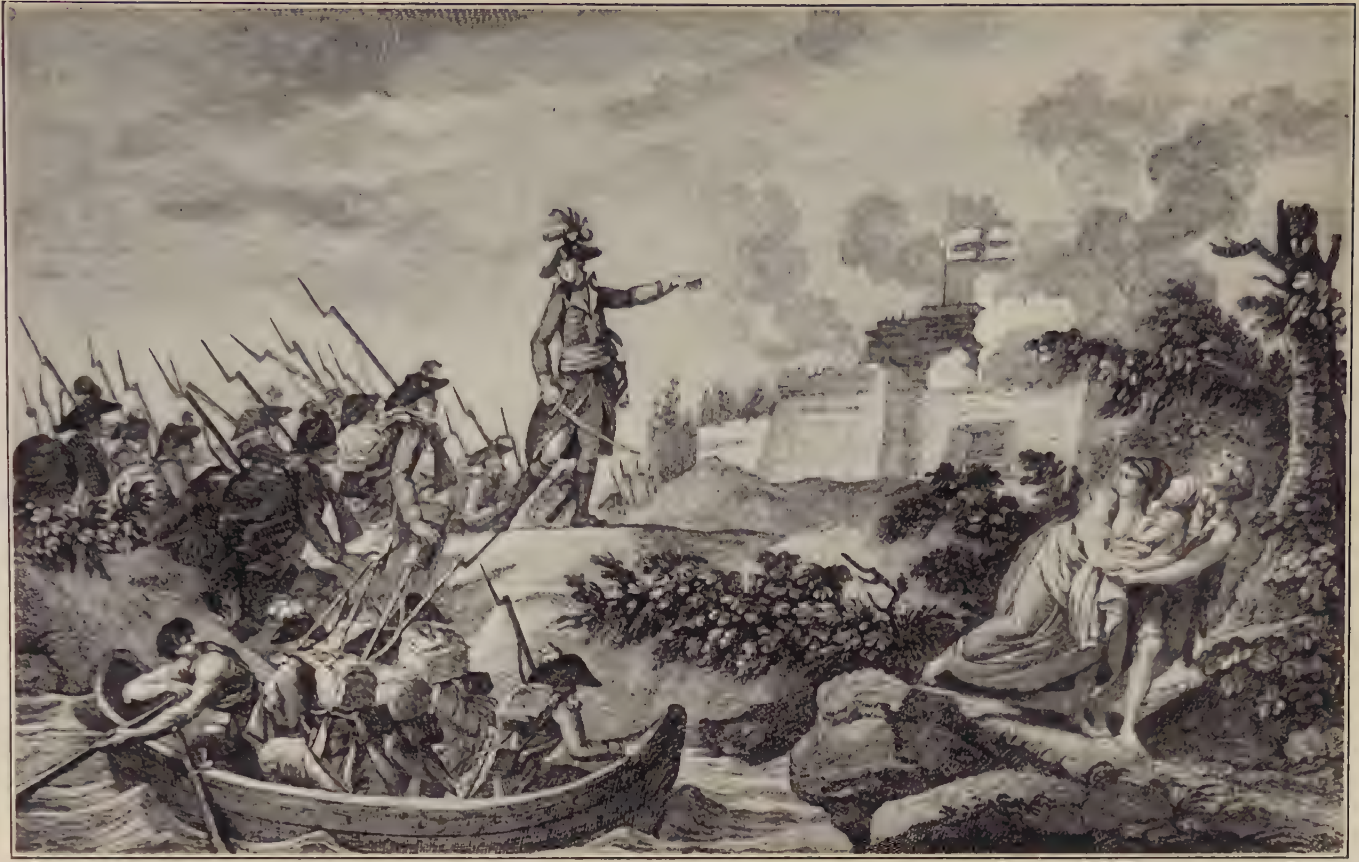
Hompesch accordingly sent the Maître Ecuyer Rouyer to the Batavian Consul, M. de Fremereux, to ask him to carry the letter to Bonaparte. De Fremereux was, however, very old and weak in the legs and he refused to climb up the side of a three-decker by a rope-ladder at midnight, but agreed to send his clerk of the Consulat, M. Melan, a French émigré, whom he qualified for this mission with the temporary title of 'Chancellier du Consulat de la République Batavienne'. This was reported to the Grand Master, and Rouyer was sent back to M. Melan with the letter to Bonaparte.

The Grand Master then ordered the white flag to be flown on the two forts, S. Elmo and Ricasoli, and while awaiting a reply to his letter, went to his room to seek some sleep.

Melan delivered the letter and brought back a verbal reply from General Berthier saying that a representative of General Bonaparte would bring to the Grand Master at the Palace the 'suspension des armes', at noon of the coming day.

The Grand Master, it will have been seen, played but a small part as military leader in these events. It has, however, been noted that at the last stage of the attack, Hompesch gave, on his own initiative, some directions suggestive of a better spirit than historians have allowed him.

He ordered the guards at Porta Reale to be increased, and the Palace guards likewise, and a cannon *à la mitrailleuse* to be placed in the courtyard of the Palace itself, as if he were prepared to resist to the death, if Valletta were entered by the French troops.



GENERAL MARMONT CAPTURES THE STANDARD OF THE ORDER

(From a contemporary engraving)

To face p. 294

He also decided, though perhaps too late, on showing himself to the people, addressing them, and passing through the city to Floriana to encourage the troops assembled there by his presence. A sort of general headquarters for the forces of the Order, in the retreat towards Valletta, had been fixed in this place by the Seneschal, Prince Camille de Rohan.

The Sacred Council, together with the Knights who surrounded his person, strongly opposed this measure; representing that by thus exposing himself, he endangered the Order, which must infallibly be destroyed if any of the rebels should succeed in taking away his life. They added, that he was not master of his own person, which belonged to the community, and even went so far as to make some resistance. The Grand Master, therefore, thought himself obliged to give up the point, and to stifle this generous impulse, which, if properly followed, might perhaps have saved the Order, or at least have given it an honourable end.

It may have been due to the Grand Master's own suggestion that one effort, faintly reflecting the bravery of other days, was made against the enemy.

It was decided to rally the spirits of the garrison by a sortie from the city, and three hundred men were chosen from the regiment of Malta and from the Marines. When these, bearing their standards, advanced through Floriana, and into the open, they were met by Marmont and some of the 19th Brigade. Their dismay at meeting this superior force was added to when it was seen that an ex-Knight, the Chevalier Picot de Mornas, who had been an engineer officer in the Order, was with the enemy. This small band was quickly broken up by the French.

Marmont with his own hand captured one of the standards and was promoted by Bonaparte a General of Brigade for this personal achievement in what otherwise proved a small affair.

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The morning of June 11 now came. The representative of the French Marine, Eynaud, was still in chains, and Ligondez besought the Grand Master, as an act of clemency if not of justice, to have them removed. The Grand Master, indignant at such atrocities as had been committed on Eynaud, told Doublet to make an order to the Chevalier de Merigny, to remove the chains from the man, who was dying, and release him. This was done, but the unfortunate Eynaud died an hour later in the arms of his family.

A Curious Scene

In the interval, while awaiting the arrival of the envoy of Bonaparte to arrange a suspension of arms, the Grand Master thought fit also to release the Chevalier de Bosredon Ransijat from his cell in Fort S. Angelo.

A curious scene resulted. As this Knight approached the Palace he was surrounded and courted by a crowd of his fellow-Knights, many of them his ancient enemies, who now addressed him as their only saviour. Royer and Doublet at the same moment making for the Palace, fell in with the crowd and were asked by persons, ready yesterday to stone Ransijat as a traitor, now to recommend him to the Grand Master as the only man fit to undertake the delicate negotiations with the General-in-Chief. One, in particular, who had been most unjust against him, 'flew like a hare to make the suggestion to the Grand Master'!

When the Chevalier de Bosredon Ransijat saw his old friends Royer and Doublet, he stopped to talk to them and expressed his contempt for the 'false poisonous jargon' of the others, and his great surprise at being asked to act as the mediator of the Order with Bonaparte. He said finally that he would only do so if they gave him 'carte blanche'. Then they all entered the Palace.

Royer and Doublet, like their colleagues, had now really no work to do, and sat waiting in their office for the Envoy to arrive. As was to be expected, they discussed all lines of diplomatic action possible for the Order. There was talk of a dictatorship, and the names of Miari and Tousard were mentioned.

Royer attended from time to time on the Grand Master, and as often as he came from the magistral apartments, Doublet was told of the pitiable condition of the Grand Master.

The appearance of Hompesch betokened his despair. He was in tears. His staff, he felt, were losing their loyalty. 'Never mind,' the Chamberlain Ligondez flippantly had cried to the French Secretary on hearing his fears, 'all will evaporate in tears!' Doublet's endurance, too, seems to have waned, for before noon came, he went home to his dinner, not knowing of, or being indifferent to, the imminent arrival of the Envoy.

* * *

Midday rang on the great clock in the courtyard: those curious slaves in bronze were not to strike many more hours for Hompesch in Malta.

It was the hour named for the Envoy to arrive and punctually he was announced to the Chamberlain Ligondez, who received him on the staircase.

The Grand Master had assembled his staff about him. An estafier had been sent for Doublet, who, leaving his soup unfinished, had returned to the Palace and prepared a table with pens, ink, and paper in the Grand Master's study, where the interview was to take place.

For this momentous meeting Hompesch, we are told, had summoned to support him only four Knights of the Order, members of the Congregation of State.

General Junot was the sole accredited envoy of Bonaparte. He was accompanied by two remarkable men: one the citizen Poussielgue, the confidential agent of Bonaparte, who had acted in Malta in the previous year as a spy, and the other, to the astonishment of all, the ex-Knight, Dolomieu, who once had enjoyed by his merits no less than by his seniority in the Langue of Auvergne, a seat in the Sacred Council. He no longer wore the *Croix de Malte*. They were followed to the door of the study by a crowd of Knights, amongst them the Chevalier de Bosredon Ransijat, now conversing with his old friend Dolomieu.

On entering, General Junot handed a letter to the Grand Master from General Berthier in the following terms:

LIBERTY—EQUALITY—FRENCH REPUBLIC

To His Excellency the Grand Master of S. John of Jerusalem.

In consequence of the demand which Your Excellency has made for a suspension of arms, the Commander-in-Chief has ordered his first aide-de-camp, the Chief of Brigade (Junot), to attend upon Your Eminence, and has authorised him to conclude and sign a suspension of arms. I beg Your Excellency to be assured of the desire I have to proffer to you the marks of esteem, which I entertain for you.

(By order of the Commander-in-Chief.)

The Grand Master and the members of the Sacred Council received the Envoy standing. Dolomieu wished to kiss the hand of the Prince, but Hompesch would not allow him to do so and embraced him. The Bailli de Pennes, who thought highly of Dolomieu, also gave him a friendly welcome, embraced him, and asked him frankly, as much in a tone of reproof as of enquiry, how he came to be with these people.

'I am here,' replied Dolomieu, 'because General Bonaparte thinks this would be agreeable to his Eminence, at least that is how he expressed it to me, praying that I should accompany General Junot, who can testify this fact to His Eminence.' The Prince, smiling, sat down and signed to the others to do so. Dolomieu, Poussielgue, and Doublet remained standing for the simple reason that there were only six chairs in the small room. The Bailli de Pennes accordingly went out, and obtained three other arm-chairs for those standing.

This Grand Cross then put on his 'lunettes', approached the table and took the pen in his hand—for he was a 'faiseur' and liked doing things in style—and asked the Grand Master what was the preamble to put upon the head of the document?

'There is no need,' interrupted General Junot, 'for a preamble. Four lines will do and Poussielgue, here, will draw them up for you!'

Citizen Poussielgue then took a pen and wrote the following:

ARTICLE I

Il est accordé pour vingt-quatre heures, à compter depuis six heures du soir d'aujourd'hui, 11 Juin, 1798, jusqu'à demain à six heures du soir, 12 du même mois, une suspension d'armes, entre l'armée de la République française, commandée par le Général Bonaparte, représente par le chef de brigade Junot, premier aide-de-camp, et entre Son Altesse Eminentissime de l'Ordre de Saint-Jean de Jerusalem.

ARTICLE II

Dans les vingt-quatre heures, il sera envoyé à bord de *l'Orient* des députés pour faire la capitulation.

Faite double à Malte, le 11 Juin, 1798.

This act was then signed by the Grand Master, seemingly without the slightest objection on his part or on that of the members of the Order present.

When General Junot had signed, he asked permission of the Grand Master to visit the apartments, the galleries of the Palace, and also the Armoury. Poussielgue and Dolomieu accompanied him, saying that they would return to take farewell of His Eminence.

When the three left his presence, the Grand Master passed from his study into the next room which immediately filled with an immense crowd of Knights whom curiosity had brought together. They pressed round the Grand Master and in the confusion few persons could be clearly heard or recognized. Hompesch, indeed, wished to gain the quiet of his own room, but did not dare to ask them to make way for him.

The Prerogative of the Grand Master

There remained the important matter of the selection of deputies to be sent on board the *Orient* to arrange the terms of the capitulation mentioned in the document just signed. Soon voices in the crowd about the Grand Master were heard to ask if the *deputies nominated* had been told to go back with General Junot. Doublet thought this strange—'How could they have been appointed so quickly?'

Hompesch, usually so timorous of action, so anxious to consider a matter further, had acted in this connection in a most curious way: he had already appointed and chosen on his own initiative the envoys of the Order without referring the matter to the Sacred Council or without any formal record of the transaction. He had apparently done so actually before the arrival in Valletta of the Envoy from Bonaparte, claiming to make the selection in virtue of his prerogative as Grand Master.

It appeared also that the Maltese Deputies had urged the Grand Master, when appointing envoys of the Order, to add four notables of the Maltese people; and Hompesch had agreed to do so. He had nominated the following:

The Bailli Frisari, the Chevalier de Bosredon Ransijat, for the Order; Baron Mario Testaferrata, Auditor Benoit Schembri, the ex-Auditor Muscat and Dr. F. T. Torreggiani for the people.

It was reported to the Grand Master that Torreggiani could not be found—he had actually gone off to Cottonera to pacify the Maltese soldiers there. These soldiers, disregarding the suspension of arms, had persisted in firing on the French. Hompesch, therefore, appointed another Maltese, by name Bonnani, in his place.

The Chevalier de Amat was also added by Hompesch on the suggestion of the Auditor Bruno. He was Chargé d'Affaires in Malta of the King of Spain, who was at peace with France, and it was thought that he might secure the mediation of his Sovereign in the negotiations with the French.

The envoys of the Order had neither instructions nor powers defined for them by any written document.

The way in which the deputation had been formed seemed to our formalist Doublet to be full of irregularities; its composition was questionable; and to send it thus precipitately on board the *Orient* the height of folly.

In a matter of such magnitude the Sacred Council should have been consulted as to the terms which the Order could accept with honour. This could have been done because the second Article of the suspension of arms allowed twenty-four hours' grace within which to arrange for the capitulation.

Doublet sought accordingly an urgent interview with the Grand Master and begged him to clear the crowd out of the Palace, and to summon the Council of State to deliberate on the best means of meeting the situation, and to draw up instructions for their deputies.

The Grand Master demurred to this, saying that everyone was calling for their immediate departure.

At this stage General Junot, Dolomieu, and Poussielgue returned from their tour of inspection of the Palace to take farewell of the Grand Master, and 'to thank him for his condescension'.

Ransijat appeared at the same moment and suggested that the deputation should go with Junot's party to the fleet.

'The presence of Junot,' he said, 'will protect our deputies from any insult from the troops which they might suffer on their way.' This pretext for their immediate departure seemed to please Hompesch.

'I would not prevent them going,' he weakly observed, 'but Doublet insists that they should not go without formal authorization and without instructions discussed and sanctioned in the Council. . . .'

'No, Monseigneur,' rejoined Ransijat, 'that's not at all necessary and it would be more simple, more worthy, and more noble of Your Eminence to leave yourself entirely to the generosity of the victor. . . .'

'Yes,' interrupted Doublet, 'trust yourself to him if you would see yourself in the end despoiled of everything. I predict, Monseigneur, at the risk of displeasing you, that to give carte-blanche to your deputies and to fix no limits to their powers is to deliver yourself without reserve to your enemy who, without the slightest scruple, will strip you of everything, even your honour, which should be dearer to you than your life.'

'Oh,' cried Ransijat, 'how can you think Bonaparte capable of forgetting this point? Don't believe him, Monseigneur, and give credit to the magnanimity of the General.'

'I acknowledge,' replied the Grand Master, 'that I would rather for my own peace of mind see Doublet think as you do and consent to my request that he should follow and assist the deputation to the best of his power. Come, my dear Doublet,' he added, 'allow yourself to be persuaded and do not refuse me this last service, otherwise . . .'

At this point the Grand Master broke down; someone of the deputation came up and told Ransijat that they were waiting for him. He took leave of the Grand Master and went away, without looking at or saying a word to Doublet.

Hompesch, thus left alone with Doublet, repeated his request that he should go with the deputation. The faithful Secretary, 'having no more force to resist', yielded and 'sacrificing his fear and his reluctance' set out to overtake the others who had already left the Palace. He soon overtook them, for they had decided, fearing a hostile populace, to leave the city unobtrusively on foot, and when outside the city and safe within the French lines, to travel by *calèches* to S. Julian's Bay, whither General Junot had sent his boat, from the Grand Harbour, to meet them after dark.

When Doublet joined them, he found he had a folded paper in his hand which he did not remember receiving. On being opened, it was found to be a second copy of the *suspension d'armes*, signed by the Grand Master, but copied with such precipitation that it only contained the first article.

CHAPTER V

THE CAPITULATION, 11–12 *JUNE*, 1798

Bonaparte, on board the Orient, *dictates terms at Midnight*, 11–12 *June*, 1798 ; *Doublet's Account of the Interview*

IT was night when the deputation reached S. Julian's Bay. The boat which was to take them to the *Orient* had not yet arrived and they had to wait without either seats or shelter in a damp and cold evening dew until eleven o'clock, when it appeared. The flagship was more than a mile away in the open sea. They took an hour in the pinnace to reach her. The ship's bells had just rung midnight as they boarded. The greater number of the delegates were suffering from mal-de-mer, due to the strong rollers of a north-east wind. Helped by sailors, they were obliged to enter the ship through the portholes. 'I, more nimble than the others and lighter because I had not dined,' writes Doublet, 'had clambered up the ropes to the first deck, but so clumsily, that had I not been helped by a soldier, who gave me a hand to conduct me to the mainmast, I should have broken my neck twenty times.'

The General-in-Chief and his Headquarters Staff were asleep after the fatigues of the day. They were awakened, and half an hour afterwards the deputation was called to the council-room, where they found General Bonaparte with Admiral Brueys and General Berthier. On seeing their numbers so small—Ransijat, Muscat, Amato, and Doublet only having appeared—Bonaparte asked for the others, but he was told the rolling had made them so ill that they were sitting outside for a while between-decks.

Bonaparte opened this momentous interview fraught with the destinies of Europe by making one of his sly jokes :

'You did well to come,' said the General to them, 'because I was about to send some *dragées*[1] to salute the town and they would not have seemed sweet to you ! But I perceive the sea has been unkind to you and that you are not warm (we were all in simple coats of black taffeta), so I think a little punch will invigorate you.'

'Nobody answered him,' noted Doublet, 'but we sat down around a table. Rum was brought in a "jatte" and the General served it himself, giving a cup to each one. Then, having called for writing materials, which were brought him, he began to draw up the "capitulation", which he was pleased to call a "convention" out of regard, he said, for "l'honneur chevaleresque".

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[1] Sugar-almonds *or* small-shot.

'When he had written the first four Articles, he read them out.'

The first Article set forth the renunciation by the Order of its rights of sovereignty over and ownership of the Islands of Malta, Gozo, and Comino in favour of the French Republic for ever. Ransijat or his colleague, Muscat, and the Chargé d'Affaires of Spain having made no objection whatever, Doublet continues, 'the General wished to read the second Article, but I thought it my duty to speak, to make known that the Grand Master, who had sent me to defend his rights, had in my presence consented (on the request of the Chevalier de Ransijat) to leave himself to the good faith and entirely to the generosity of the conqueror. It seemed to me indispensable to inform the General of this that he might treat the Prince and the Order with less severity.

'"Who are you," Bonaparte asked me, "to dare thus to interrupt? Wait until all your colleagues are here to make your observations and discuss with them the convention article by article."

'"I am," I answered, "the simple envoy of the Grand Master to defend, I repeat, his rights, his interests, and his honour, and I cannot in consequence keep silent upon an Article which would deprive him of one and the other, for to expect that the Order would renounce its sovereignty and its possessions is to take from it everything, even honour, and in this case I demand where is the *generosity of the conqueror* which was promised to the Grand Master and to which the Chevalier de Ransijat invited him to abandon himself with confidence?"

'"Oh! ma foi, all the worse for him to have believed so easily: woe to the conquered! that is my maxim, and that which your Grand Master ought to have said to himself. Anyway, there will not be anything else to complain about and the following Articles will prove to you that I have not forgotten his present or future interests, nor his honour, nor even just compensation due to members of the Order."

'This was said without anyone's breathing a word.

'The General continued his reading and was interrupted by Ransijat only when he came to the Article establishing the pension which the members of the Order, born Frenchmen, were to enjoy. The loss of Malta to the Order had left him indifferent and he only found his tongue when the pensions of French Knights came to be discussed. As for me, I did not think it was my duty to take any part in this discussion which was very lively. But I thought it my duty to speak again to refute the unjust reproach which they made against the Grand Master when they stated that, in the amicable relations recently established between the Order and Russia, he had favoured that Power to the prejudice of France.'

So Doublet entered into an amazingly long discussion upon the relations of the Order with Russia and the project of a Russian Priory.

General Bonaparte in his criticism, he said, had adopted only the suspicious attitude of M. de Vergennes, under the old régime in 1784. There was to be found in de Rohan's letter-books some curious correspondence of the Grand Master with the Bailli de Loras, which could throw light on the matter. A mysterious emissary of the Empress Catherine, a certain Captain Pisaro, had come to Malta. . . . The Empress had sent to the Grand Master her portrait, adorned with emblems and allegorical figures, and the report of this had filled the mind of the French Foreign Minister with ideas of a mysterious plot! De Rohan, indeed, had disliked the Empress and she had, in fact, taken great offence at his attitude. So a Bailli de Sagramoso, a Venetian Knight, had to make counter-moves in S. Petersburg to protect the interests of the Order. . . .

When Catherine II died there was the positive passion of her son, now become the Emperor Paul, for the Order, which went so far as to make him desire to possess 'the original and simple cross carried by the Grand Master, La Vallette', and he actually persuaded the envoy of the Order at S. Petersburg, the Bailli de Litta, to write to the Grand Master to look for it in the Treasury of Malta and give it to him!

Doublet and Bruno were ordered, therefore, by de Rohan to search for it. They found the cross itself, and it transpired, from a chirograph, which was formally registered in the Chancellery, that La Vallette when dying had desired it to be left to the Madonna of Philermo. They made a copy of this deed, and sent it and the cross to Russia, where they were presented by the Ambassador of the Order to the Emperor with great solemnity.

In the formation of a new Russian Priory there was the difficulty of the admission of schismatics of the Greek Rite. Many cipher messages had passed between the Pope at Rome, the Emperor Paul I, and the Papal Nuncio at Warsaw. The Roman Court was interested in the project as a move towards the reunion of the Greek Rite with the Latin Church. . . .

In the negotiations with Russia, Doublet argued 'there was nothing else, therefore, beyond an effort to make up their losses in France by new affiliations, and the delicate matter of the reunion of the two Churches'.

'You know all this yourself, General, from the treaty,' concluded Doublet, 'the first draft of which you intercepted last year when you seized the despatch which the special messenger of the Ambassador of the Order at S. Petersburg was carrying to the late Grand Master de Rohan.'

'That is true, I remember,' replied Bonaparte, 'but all this which you have told me does not prevent me from thinking that Russia has had for a long time her designs on Malta, and it is to forestall her execution of them in any event, that on the refusal made by the Grand Master to me the day before yesterday, which was not at all friendly, we tried to make ourselves masters.'

'I can assure you, General,' replied Doublet, 'that as regards Russia, neither the Grand Master nor the Council need reproach themselves in the slightest. The Pope had already knowledge of the treaty through his Nuncio at S. Petersburg and everyone knows that his approbation would not have been given to anything prejudicial to the Catholic Powers, friends of the Order.'

'In the number of these Powers,' sarcastically asked Bonaparte, 'do you really include the French Republic?'

'Our conduct towards her,' rejoined Doublet, 'which has been full of "*ménagement*" in spite of her decree of the spoliation of our Commanderies, ought to suffice to prove it.'

'But who will guarantee to us that in your treaties with Russia there was not some Article or secret pact between the Emperor Paul and your Grand Master in direct correspondence with each other?'

'If there had been, General, I must have known, because all the work, and all the correspondence would pass through my hands, and so . . .'

'But how do you know,' cried Ransijat, interrupting Doublet, 'that the Grand Master had not a private correspondence in *German?*'

'Anyhow,' cried Bonaparte, without allowing Doublet to answer the unbelieving and imprudent Ransijat, 'whether that was or was not, we have provided for it.' Thereupon, without wishing to hear any more he took up the thread of the discussion concerning pensions which had been interrupted by this digression.

A long debate then ensued between Ransijat and Bonaparte upon the future of the French Knights.

Ransijat pleaded for the free entrance into France of all Frenchmen received into the Order, without any exception or difficulty. He wanted all their names to be effaced from the list of émigrés. Bonaparte consented only for those Knights present in Malta, and objected that his powers did not permit him to give this entrance into France for any outside the Island. He was obliged, on the contrary, to send to the Directory a list of those Knights whom he had found there.

Ransijat replied that all the Knights, even if absent from Malta, were considered by a custom of the Order to be in official residence in Malta, for they only left it 'on leave of absence'.

Bonaparte, growing impatient, cut him short with these words:

'I am sorry, but the Executive Directory do not see this as you do. There is another point. Many of your gentlemen, even the old ones, have fought against our volunteers and have gone back to Malta and boasted that they have killed them without mercy, even those who laid down their arms and demanded quarter. Now you must be conscious, after this, that if I shut my eyes to those who are at Malta (and I acknowledge to you that I wish they were all here) I cannot do so to those who are not here. I do not wish to deceive you: I declare to you on the contrary with the best faith in the world, that if I were to adhere to your request it would be a motive for the Government to treat this Article as a complete nullity and then it would be found that in order to render a service to the culpable ones, you would have caused me to commit an injustice towards the innocent.'

To this Ransijat had no answer.

The pensions proposed for the French Knights were then discussed. Bonaparte had fixed by Article IV a pension of 600 francs, and of 1000 francs for those of sixty years of age and over. Ransijat asked for 1000 francs and 1500 francs respectively. The discussion became protracted.

The General, growing impatient, accepted a compromise proposed by Admiral Brueys, by which the original amount of 600 francs was increased by 100 francs for those under sixty years of age.

The other Articles passed with very little difficulty.

The ex-Auditor, Muscat, attempted to make a harangue to demand the preservation of ‘ the exemptions and privileges of the Maltese nation ’ ; Bonaparte amused himself for a moment with the idea but ended the matter by declaring that ‘ privileges or corporations existed no longer and that the law was equal for all ’.

The two other Maltese deputies who were present did not open their mouths. The fourth, stunned by the rolling of the boat from the time he had entered by the porthole, had remained between-decks, and only appeared at the moment of signature.

The Bailli Frisari, who was very silent during the discussion, only felt scruples when his signature came to be called for, and wished to reserve the rights of his sovereign, the King of Naples, fearing he would lose his commanderies there. As he could neither speak nor understand French, he asked his colleague Ransijat to be his interpreter to the General as to his reservations.

‘ You can make any reservations you like,’ said Bonaparte ; ‘ we will know how, if we must, to nullify them by cannon shot.’

The Chargé d’Affaires of Spain, El Caballero Felipe De Amat, added his signature to those of the Maltese deputies.

They then handed Doublet the pen to sign also. He refused to sign.

‘ I do not know,’ he explained, ‘ if I have any authority to do so, and even if I had, I would be very guarded in signing a convention which covers for ever with shame the Order, the Grand Master, and the Maltese people, without any resulting glory to the General or advantage to France.’

‘ How so ? ’ demanded Bonaparte.

‘ Because,’ Doublet answered, ‘ the almost powerless position of your fleet will leave Malta henceforth at the mercy of the squadron of the English Fleet, by which we shall be blockaded perhaps before you have landed in Egypt.’

‘ This bad prophecy,’ cried Admiral Brueys, ‘ proves you have very little idea of the bravery of our sailors who will always know how to defend an Island, the acquisition of which is about to become so important to the Republic.'

Thereupon, each one got up. Bonaparte had a private conference with Ransijat, 'and as their looks were often cast in my direction I had reason to think that I was the subject of their conversation'.

'Daylight had now appeared and we began to think of getting back, and,' concludes Doublet, 'I hastened on my way to reach the Grand Master before the others.'

CHAPTER VI

MALTA A FRENCH DEPARTMENT

The News reaches the City, Tuesday Morning, 12 *June—Bonaparte allows no delay—Malta a French Department—A Maltese Legion—Information for the Beys: The Order is Dissolved—The Church—The Maltese People: Equality and Fraternity*

IT remains to give a glimpse of the dissolution of the Order, in the days immediately following the capitulation on the *Orient.*

Bonaparte remained in the Island until June 18. Before his own departure for Egypt, he deported the Grand Master, sent away the Knights hostile to his interests, and established the government of Malta as a French possession on a most elaborate plan, and in a democratic form entirely new to the people.

The new administration was brought into being by a sheaf of orders, evidently long thought out; some were issued on June 12, the very morning of the capitulation. In establishing this new Government, the General-in-Chief fondly hoped that Malta and the Maltese people, with their unique racial and other qualifications, would at once take a definite and useful place in the new Eastern Empire of the Republic. But this interesting aspect of the occupation of Malta by the French, from 12 June, 1798, to 5 September, 1800, when they surrendered to the English, is not within the scope of this book.

We will however, give, from Doublet's memoirs, the appearance in the last act of our drama of Bonaparte and his staff, and of many of the characters of the Order whose close acquaintance we have now made.

The News reaches the City, Tuesday Morning, 12 *June*

Doublet, as might be expected, was the first to bring the news of the capitulation to the Grand Master, outdistancing, when they landed from the *Orient*, the other members of the deputation, on the road to the Palace.

'Well,' asked the Grand Master, 'how has the interview gone?'

'Monseigneur,' replied Doublet, 'I wish I could tell you what Francis I wrote after the battle of Pavia: "All is lost save honour." Unfortunately, we have lost everything, even honour! . . .' So saying, Doublet somewhat inconsistently urged that the situation might yet be saved: let the Grand Master tear up the shameful treaty or call the Sacred Council together and reject it.

Exhausted with his labours of the night, he sought permission to go to his home, where he found his wife and family 'in desolation', not knowing what had happened to him since he had gone to the Palace at noon on the previous day to assist at the reception of General Junot.

The deputies, on their return, were naturally beset by their friends curious to know the fate of the Order and the country.

'Shall we have a French garrison?' asked one.

'General Bonaparte will land in Valletta, of course? Where will he stay?'

'Did he receive our deputies pleasantly?'

No one seemed to realize that Malta was going to change its master. Doublet, worn out and worried, did not want to enter into any details. However, he was forced at length to tell them the worst.

'Is it possible, the Grand Master has really given in? What then will happen to him? Who will pay his enormous debts?'

Their questions would have required twenty mouths to answer.

Doublet placated them by saying that the treaty, if ratified, would be printed and they could read it.

* * *

About five o'clock on that same morning the standards of the Order were hauled down from the bastions of Valletta, and an 'ordre du jour' of 12 June from the *Orient* read:

> 'The Army is informed that the enemy has surrendered; the Standard of Liberty floats over the forts of Malta.
>
> 'The General-in-Chief calls the Army to the observance of the most exact discipline and a respect for persons and property, and requires that the Maltese people be treated with friendliness.'

However, the Maltese soldiers who defended Cottonera and Burmola declared that they would never allow the French to enter, and the Knights were obliged to ask the Archbishop to send one of his priests, whom he thought might have sufficient influence to persuade them to do so.

In the interval the soldiers had revolted against the Knights in command and killed one of them, the Chevalier d'Andelarre, and dragged another into Valletta and under the balcony of the Palace, to murder him before the Grand Master's eyes. This they would certainly have done if the Master of the Horse, Rouyer, had not had the courage and the presence of mind to demand in the name of the Grand Master that he should be delivered over to him to be punished ' according to law '. For the soldiers accused their officers of treason—just as they had previously done on the Sunday in the case of the defective cartridges, saying now that their officers had spiked the guns in the batteries!

A party went off to verify the statement. It was found that it was untrue, as all the guns were in order; but the Knights were French and that had been enough to expose them to the suspicions of the infuriated people.

The Archbishop had sent a Maltese priest, Don Salvatore Casha, Rector of the Church of the Holy Souls in Valletta, to appease this disordered patriotism, but it was not enough, and Mgr. Labini had to go in person to calm them and induce the people to go to their homes.

* * *

In due course, on this morning of Tuesday, the Chevalier de Ransijat reached the Palace with a duplicate copy of the treaty. The Grand Master was alone, but he summoned his Auditor Bruno. This duplicate copy, yet to be completed with some of the signatures of the deputies of the Maltese and of the Order, was to be retained by Hompesch. The question of ratification came up. The Chevalier de Ransijat cleverly countered the idea, by saying that Bonaparte ' did not expect that any such ratification would take place, as it was a useless proceeding '. Bruno, too, had already privately, and for reasons different from those of Ransijat, urged that the Grand Master should *not* seek either the rejection or ratification of the Treaty in the Sacred Council, and should not, therefore, convene that body. He advanced the sophistical, if diplomatic, argument that in the absence of any such ratification the repudiation of the Convention would be the easier at a later day. In this spirit the Grand Master did nothing and outwardly pursued, in his remaining days in Malta, a passive acquiescence in the desires of Bonaparte.

Bonaparte allows no delay

Bonaparte, however, was determined to make the surrender of Malta a reality at the earliest moment, leaving little time for ratification or rejection of the Convention.

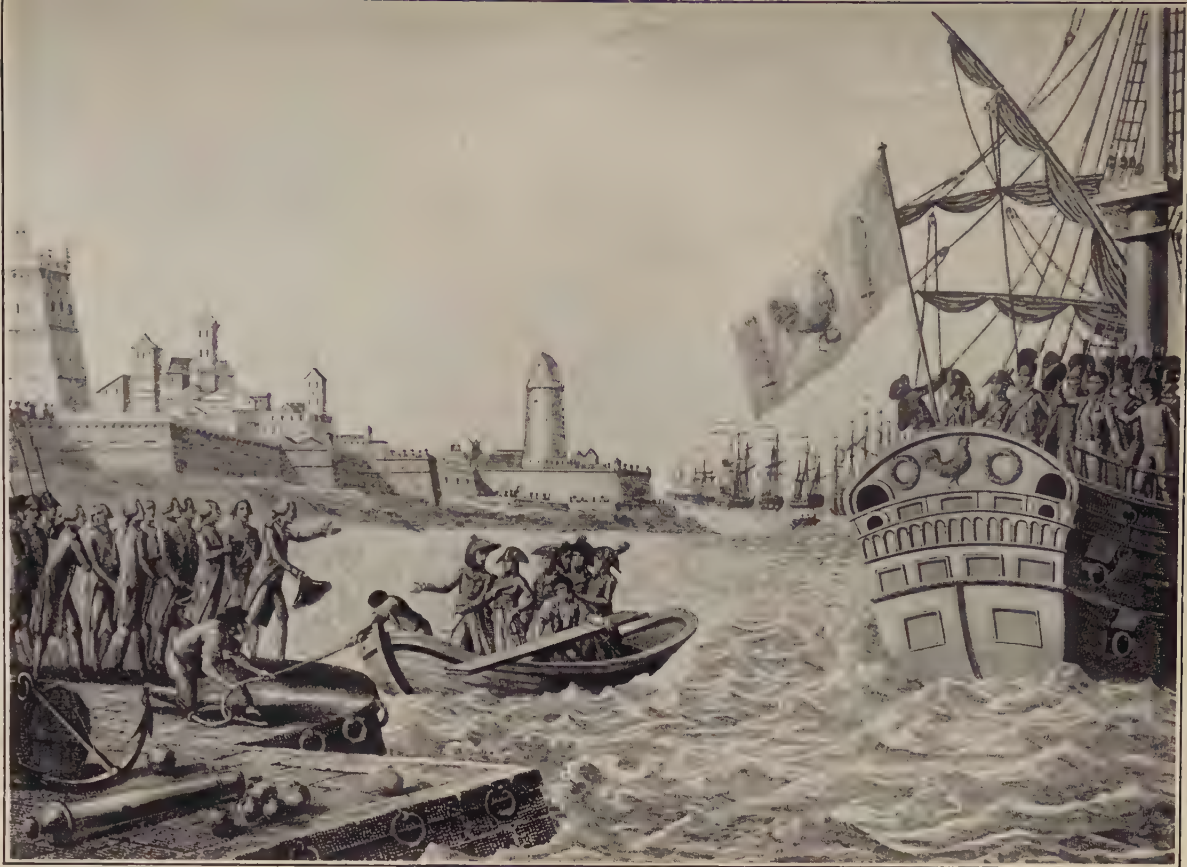
It was arranged, as a term which the delegates duly signed, that at ten o'clock on that morning, French officers, accompanied by a Maltese officer, should wait upon the Grand Master to receive from him a formal surrender of his principality by the necessary orders signed by him, and directed to the commandants and officials of the Order, to hand the Port itself, and all their other possessions, to the representatives of the French Republic. On this morning, likewise, the 'Grand Visconte'—acting for the last time for the Order—issued notices, which were placarded in the principal streets of the city, informing the people of the fact of the conclusion of a Convention between the French and the Order.

Towards midday, Fort Manoel, the Castle of S. Angelo, Fort Tigné, the bastions of Senglea, of Santa Margherita, of Vittoriosa, and the lines of Cottonera were filled with French troops. One thousand two hundred pieces of cannon, forty thousand rifles, and one million five hundred thousand *livres* of powder were taken over. A marine officer also took over the three frigates and the four galleys of the Order and all the marine stores. Two of the ships were already in their hands, having been seized during the hostilities, and impressed into the service of the Republic. The names of the ships of the Order were in due course changed, and the flag of S. John was seen no more in the Mediterranean.

At four o'clock on this day, Tuesday, a great number of the formidable French Fleet entered the Grand Harbour, moving slowly and towed by their boats—amongst them the Flagship with Bonaparte on board. Great crowds collected on the bastions and on the quays to see the recent victor of Lodi, now the master of Malta.

Bonaparte chose to give his entry an air of triumph. He left the *Orient* in a shallop, and landed at the Dogana. Here he was received with demonstrations of regard by a crowd of Knights of Republican leanings, and, followed by these, he made his way by the Strada Nuova into Valletta.

Bonaparte politely refused the offer of a magnificent carriage



GENERAL BONAPARTE LANDS AT THE DOGANA, VALLETTA, 12 JUNE, 1798, AND IS RECEIVED BY HIS SUPPORTERS IN THE ORDER

To face p. 312

which the Grand Master had sent for him. He preferred to walk on foot up the principal hill of Valletta, surrounded by his Headquarters Staff and an immense number of officers, between a double line of his soldiers who would, as he loved them to do, thus share his triumphs. They were hardly able to keep back the gazing crowds. Martial music enlivened the proceedings.

He slept the first night in the Banca dei Giuratii and lodged for the rest of his stay at the Palazzo Parisio, the present General Post Office.

* * *

The General-in-Chief, in due course, received from his various generals detailed reports of their operations in the landing and taking of Malta. Bonaparte had carefully instructed them in his orders for the landing that they should do everything, consonant with military and naval requirements, to conciliate the native population and prepare the way for a permanent French occupation.

General Regnier, for instance, had been told to issue a proclamation 'in extremely simple words, which he will have translated into the language of the country and copied by native writers, stating that the French do not come with any intentions of changing their customs or their religion, and that the most severe discipline will be maintained and that the priest will be especially protected'. A great respect was therefore to be paid to all priests and members of religious orders.

The generals were also told to ascertain and report upon the morale and feelings of the people as soon as they had made contact with them. The reports of 'operations' by Vaubois, Desaix, Baragueys d'Hilliers, and others, included therefore, as Bonaparte required, several suggestive remarks upon social and political conditions in the Islands.

General Kleber's report was necessarily short and struck a plaintive note. This dashing cavalry leader, as we have already said, had been forced to remain on board the *Franklin* during the attack, for Bonaparte, knowing the nature of the country, had expressly forbidden the landing of horses.

'I hasten to felicitate you,' he wrote, 'Citoyen General, on the important conquest you have made for the Republic—but how can I congratulate myself, as I have been merely a passive spectator of so extraordinary an event? I have ordered my aide-de-camp to receive your orders relative to the savants and artists on board who ardently desire to see the town of Malta, as also do several officers who need provisions. . . .'

So the savants and scientists were allowed to land. Some of them, indeed, as Monge and Berthollet, were detailed for duties for which they never bargained. These scientists were at once set upon the task of listing and appraising all the gold, coinage, jewels, and precious stones in the buildings and churches belonging to the Order which were taken as prizes of war. Sufficient money was urgently needed to pay the forces in Egypt, and so, on the day after his entry, Bonaparte ordered a quantity of this gold and silver to be melted down into coin.

Malta a French Department

The genius of Bonaparte as an organizer and rapid worker was now seen.

General Vaubois was to act, when the General-in-Chief should leave for Egypt, as Military Governor of the Islands with supreme authority.

At the same time, in an order of 13 June, it was announced that the civil administration would be placed under a Commission of Government composed of nine persons, to be nominated by the General-in-Chief. A Commissioner would be appointed who would be responsible to the Military Governor for their activities and direct their programme of work. Each of the nine members was to preside in rotation for a period of six months.

This Commissioner was found to be none other than M. Regnaud de Saint Jean d'Angely, the famous Deputy who, in earlier years, had defended the Order in the National Assembly!

The Chevalier de Bosredon Ransijat was to be the first President of this Civil Commission of Government.

The Citizen Coretterie (the private secretary of the Commissioner Saint Jean d'Angely) was to act provisionally, as secretary, until such a time as a suitable permanent secretary-general could be found.

The eight other members appointed on that same day were:

Don Saverio Caruana, Canon of the Cathedral.

Baron Dorell, a jurat of the Università.

Dr. Vincent Caruana, Secretary to the Archbishop, and President of the Tribunals of the Order.

Cristofero Frendo, a Maltese lawyer,

Paolo Grungo, a judge in Gozo.
B. Schembri, a magistrate.
Paul Ciantar, a Maltese merchant.
Charles Astor, a gentleman of independent means.

To the post of Treasurer was appointed a Maltese nobleman, Count J. F. Sant.

A commission of '*National Domains*' was also created, in which was to be vested all the public property of the Order which the Commissioners were to hold in trust, or sell when necessary, for the Treasury of Malta. The citoyens Matthieu, Poussielgue, Caruson, and Roussel were its members, and they were to act under the Ordinateur-en-Chef, General Sucy.

Such were the new Commissions appointed to transform the Malta of the old régime into a French colony or Department.

To their members, General Berthier was ordered to administer the oath of obedience to the French Republic.

Bonaparte issued a number of decrees by which many old institutions were swept away, and features already familiar to us in the France of the Revolution were violently brought into the life of the Maltese people.

We cannot here do more than indicate shortly how these decrees immediately affected the Order and its members.

To clothe his acts of spoliation with some appearance of reason in the eyes of the world, Bonaparte issued an '*Exposé de la Conduite de Malte a l'égard de la France pendant la Revolution*'. In addition to alleged infractions of neutrality by the Order, in favour of Spain and England, complaint was made of the invasion of the Sovereignty of the French Republic by the Grand Master by the appointment from Malta of Knights to the command of '*chimerical Commanderies in France as they fell vacant*'.

To conciliate the Maltese, the *Exposé* concluded with the statement that 'all the partisans of the Revolution had been persecuted, several had been exiled without formality, and in the month of May 1797, a great number were arrested and imprisoned as criminals : Vassallo, one of the most remarkable men of his country by reason of his profound knowledge, being condemned to imprisonment for life'.

Drastic steps were taken in several terse orders, issued piecemeal on June 13, to deport from Malta all who might be hostile to the new Government.

All Knights, and inhabitants who were subjects of a Power at war with France were required to leave in forty-eight hours. All other Knights, under sixty years of age, were required to leave within three days.

To one of these decrees a List was added of ‘ those persons who, by the sentiments which they had for the Republic, were regarded as citizens of Malta and who might reside there if they wished ’. It bore the heading ‘ *Membres de l’Ordre de Malte exceptés par le Général-en-Chef de l’order d’expulsion* ’ and gave the names :

Ransijat, Secrétaire du Trésor.
Fay, Commissaire de fortifications ; officier d’artillerie.
Breuvart, prêtre.
Rouyer, ancien maître écuyer.
Sandilleau, prêtre.
Greiches, ancien Chambrier.
Frin, prêtre.
Daela, servant d’armes.
Tousard, ingenieur.
Lascaris, les deux frères.
Gras, prêtre.
Boeuf, prêtre.
Doublet, Secrétaire du Grand Maître.
Medicis.
Stendardi.

Bonaparte, opposite the names of the French Knights, had written, in his official copy, the words :

‘ Français.

‘ Presque tous m’ont fourni, il y a six mois, des notes utiles, ou ont fait des dons patriotiques pour la descente en Angleterre——’

Opposite the brothers Lascaris he wrote :

‘ l’un et l’autre ont refusé de porter les armes contre l’Armée et se sont constitués prisonniers ’ ;

and opposite the Italian Knights the words :

‘ Chevaliers Toscans qui ont fait des dons patriotiques pour la descente en Angleterre.’

Exceptions, too, were to be made in favour of ‘ Knights who were not professed and who had married and had their homes in Malta ’.

Likewise, exemption was granted to those ‘ who had private property in the Island ’, or those ‘ who had established manufactures or houses of business ’.

These last exemptions were typical products of Bonaparte's mind, for he always looked to the social and economic consolidation of his military conquests.

The remaining French Knights were sent back in a French ship to Antibes, 'so that those may enter France who have not fought against her, in accordance with the third Article of the Capitulation'. General Berthier was, however, to send a list of them all to the Minister of Justice 'with their names, and nothing more, either for or against'.

It was arranged at the Capitulation that the troops of the Order should remain in their barracks until otherwise provided for. Bonaparte now proposed to employ most of them as a Maltese Legion with the French army in Egypt.

A Maltese Legion

The officers and men of the Regiment of Malta, of the Grand Master's Guards; the soldiers of the ships and the galleys, and the gunners were ordered to assemble at Birchircara on Wednesday the 14th, at 5 a.m., where they were reviewed by General Marmont. They were embarked in a ship of the fleet the next day. At the same time their sons, over ten years of age, were enrolled as cabin-boys. An 'arrêté' by name ordered thirty-five Knights, all apparently French, to accompany them, rather dubiously describing these officers as 'volontaires'. They were presumably those under thirty years of age mentioned by Bonaparte in a despatch to the Directory. Actually fifty-two Knights followed Bonaparte to Egypt.

In Egypt, the Maltese Legion was commanded by a Colonel MacSheedy, seemingly an Irish émigré, and his reports to Bonaparte tell a tale of difficult tasks undertaken and done well by these Islanders. Many of them had never before been outside Malta. 'Their discipline and training,' wrote MacSheedy from his camp at Aflagaz in the next October, 'reached a point of perfection never expected by those who witnessed their first arrival,' and his heart 'bled to see their privations in the burning sands.' They and their officers, the French Knights, nearly all perished in the campaign.

Slavery was declared, by an 'arrêté' of 16 June, abolished, and the slaves set free. Those known as buonavogli—vagabonds or criminals who had sold themselves for life to the galleys—were also set at liberty and their contract, declared 'dishonourable to the human race', was destroyed.

Information for the Beys: The Order is Dissolved

At the same time the French Consuls at Tunis, Tripoli, and Algiers were told to inform the Beys that Bonaparte had liberated the 2000 slaves whom the Order held in the galleys; that the Order of the Knights of Malta was 'destroyed', and that they were henceforth to respect the Maltese, 'as being now French subjects', and were to liberate any Maltese in slavery with them.

'Let the Bey know,' he wrote to each Consul, 'that the Power which has taken Malta in two or three days will be quite able to punish him if he deviates for a moment from the regard he owes to the Republic.'

It was declared that 'the Order is dissolved', a matter which was never brought formally before the deputies in the Articles of Capitulation on the *Orient*, and, as the Order existed by brief of the Pope, Bonaparte's declaration was very questionable.

'All the property of the Order, of the Grand Master, and of the different Convents of the Knights,' was declared 'to belong to the French Republic.' The arms of the Grand Master were to be taken down, or defaced, and the tricolour, even in the churches, was to replace them. The titles of Bailli, Commandeur, or Chevalier were no longer to be used, nor was the ancient uniform of the Order to be worn on any pretext whatsoever.

While the outward forms of the Order were thus suppressed or destroyed, it was evident that many of their institutions—the Courts of Justice, the Custom House, the Health Office, the Lighthouses, the University of Studies, the Università for the supply of grain, must be retained in one form or another. They were, as far as possible, to become French institutions. The Commission of Government was, for instance, ordered 'to occupy itself incessantly with the organization of Civil and Criminal Tribunals so that justice might be administered according to the form actually established in France'.

The Church

The Church itself was at once to be transformed into a 'National Church' on the schismatic lines already attempted in France.

On 12 June, Bonaparte had written a letter to Archbishop Labini from the *Orient* before he landed and when confusion reigned in Valletta, in which he had prepared the way for the change. The General wrote of 'the pleasure he had in learning of his Grace's beneficent conduct and reception of the French troops on their entry into Città-Notabile' and gave his Grace an assurance 'that the Catholic Apostolic and Roman Religion will not only be respected, but its ministers will be specially protected'. He did not know 'a character more worthy of the veneration of men than that of a priest, who, full of the spirit of the Gospel, is persuaded that his duties require him to preach obedience to the temporal power and to maintain peace, tranquillity and union among his flock'.

He desired, therefore, 'that the Bishop will go at once to the City of Valletta and by his influence maintain calm and tranquillity amongst the people'.

All priests, religious, and nuns of any community who were not natives of Malta were to leave the place in ten days, the Italian prelate 'in virtue of his pastoral position' was alone exempt. All parishes and benefices becoming vacant would be given to Maltese, 'it not being just that strangers should enjoy the advantages of the Country'.

Religious vows were to be taken before thirty years of age, and no new priests were to be consecrated until all the present priests were actually employed.

As in France, the Religious Orders were restricted to the possession of a single house and their surplus property was to be sold and the proceeds held by the State to help the poor.

All the 'foundations, colleges, convents, and corporations of penitents, etc.', were to be suppressed. Persons in minor orders were not allowed to wear the 'collet' and the 'soutane'.

The Bishop and heads of communities were themselves to be the 'reporting officers' in respect of these regulations, and, disobedience to this arrêté was punishable by six months' imprisonment.

The Church in Malta was now to enjoy the possession of the Conventual Church of S. John in Valletta. The Cathedral Canons were to be limited to twenty—five to be attached to the cathedral at Notabile and fifteen to S. John's Church.

The Maltese People: Equality and Fraternity

The personal interests of the Maltese were concerned in the declaration that 'all inhabitants of Malta are henceforth equal. Their talents, merit, patriotism, and their attachment to the Republic shall alone establish any difference between them'.

They were soon to discover under the régime of equality and fraternity many limitations of their freedom. Though French citizens, they were not to wear the French national dress unless with permission or a certificate of good citizenship. They were all required to wear the tricolour in their hats. The Maltese nobles and gentry learned, no doubt with some surprise, that feudal titles were no longer to be used; their personal arms of nobility were not to be displayed either outside or inside their houses, and they were even forbidden to seal their letters with the crests upon their signet-rings!

A disarmament of the population was ordered, and permits would be required henceforth for the carrying of arms, and would be granted only to persons of 'known patriotism'.

The Magistral Palace, the Auberges, the official quarters and lodgings of the Knights were subjected to the sealing up and inventorying of their contents in the name of the Republic. They were then allotted to the hosts of new officials, French and Maltese, naval, military, and civil, who formed the new administration.

The Hospital itself was closed to the Maltese. It was made a French military hospital. Its plate—such of it as remained—was melted down with the gold and silver taken from the churches of the Order.

The formation of a National Guard; the division of the Islands into Municipalities with local Presidents and 'juges de paix' nominated by the civil Commissioner; the re-organization of the University on new and progressive lines, the establishment of elementary schools for the people, still largely illiterate; a training college for teachers; and a Chair of Navigation in the University, these were ideas upon which Bonaparte worked with his own hand and set headlines for the new Government of Malta to follow after he left.

But further consideration of these matters would lead us far into the French occupation of the Islands, which was to last until 5 September, 1800, and away from the immediate days of the disintegration of the Order.

CHAPTER VII

OUR CHARACTERS LEAVE THE STAGE

L'Affaire O'Hara—An Unpleasant Paragraph—A Submissive Grand Master—Hompesch's Plans—Bonaparte wishes to be Informed—The French Commissioner of Government—Sailing Orders for Egypt—A Conversation with Dolomieu—Bonaparte Reads a Lesson—Hompesch Prepares to Depart—'Citoyen Doublet'—The Grand Master no longer counts—Settling Down—Last Glimpses of the Grand Master

LET us look a little more closely at the activities of some of our friends in the Order, in those days of transformation.

We left Doublet in his home on the morning of Tuesday, 12 June, after his short interview with the Grand Master, trying to rest, as far as curious neighbours would allow, after the long strain of the Capitulation on the *Orient*. He received word that the Grand Master wished to see him, and hastened to the Palace. In the ante-room he met the Chevalier O'Hara, in a state of fear and anger, who asked him to help him. It appeared that this Knight, the Minister Plenipotentiary of the Emperor of Russia, had been visited by a Colonel Picot, an ex-Chevalier of the Order, and ordered in the name of the General-in-Chief to leave Malta in an hour! 'This peremptory treatment,' complained O'Hara, 'is against all diplomatic usage and an outrage on the Minister Plenipotentiary of the Emperor of all the Russias, accredited to the Grand Master.' He had protested to the Grand Master, who had only said that he was a fool, and turned his back on him!

There were two reasons for Bonaparte's anger against this Knight. He had taken a part in the formation of the new Grand Priory of Russia. He had also openly expressed his hostility to the French Republic by insulting conduct to the French Consul, Caruson, in Malta. In particular, he had very unjustly denounced this same Colonel Picot as a renegade Knight. Picot had, with some others, gone over openly to the service of the Republic without deceiving the Grand Master de Rohan. Was it, therefore, by chance or design that Bonaparte sent Colonel Picot to give the Chevalier O'Hara notice to quit Malta?

Doublet now remembered O'Hara's somewhat Gascon, or indeed Irish, bearing on the first appearance of the French Fleet. He had presented himself in the French Secretariat in the uniform of the galleys of the Order, and placing his hand on the hilt of his sword, cried out:

'I am here to defend Malta against all the *regicides* of the world.'

Doublet could not help smiling 'at this fanfaronnade', and asked him, 'Did he count upon cutting down many of those who were now coming full sail to Malta?'

'I shall cut down all bad heads, and if you joke I'll begin with yours!' They were all friendly enough to take this tirade in good part.

They shook hands. O'Hara said he was off to the Grand Master to 'buck him up'.

'That undertaking is above our powers,' they had called out after him.

On Tuesday morning, three days later, O'Hara was found in tears, and Doublet left him with a promise to ask the Grand Master to intervene to obtain an extension of time. Doublet saw the Grand Master, and representations were made to General Bonaparte, through the two Poussielgues, by which the desired delay was obtained.

The Russian matter, so much discussed on the *Orient*, merited in Bonaparte's mind a special despatch to the Directory, and he forwarded to Paris the intercepted papers of the Treaty with Russia, for which the unhappy O'Hara was responsible, with the following mordant remarks:

'You will find enclosed the original treaty which the Order has just concluded with Russia. It has only been ratified five days ago and the courier, who is the same whom I arrested two years ago at Ancona, has not yet left. So His Majesty, the Emperor of Russia, ought to thank me, since the occupation of Malta spares him 400,000 roubles. We have understood better than he has the interests of his nation.

'However, if his object had been to prepare the way for a position in the port of Malta, His Majesty should, it seems to me, have conducted his business a little more secretly. But whatever his object may have been, we have in the centre of the Mediterranean *the strongest place in Europe* and it will cost those much who dislodge us from it.'

Thus, as de Rohan had foretold, the project of a Grand Priory of Russia came to nothing in the hour of need.

The good services of the Chargé d'Affaires of Spain were not forgotten by Bonaparte. Writing to the King of Spain in that somewhat dictatorial tone which he liked to affect, he said :

'The French Republic has accepted the mediation of Your Majesty in the capitulation of the City of Malta.

'M. le Chevalier d'Amati, your Representative in this City, has known how to be agreeable both to the French Republic and to the Grand Master. But by the occupation of the Port of Malta by the Republic, the post of M. d'Amati is suppressed. I recommend him to Your Majesty, so that you may be kind enough not to forget him in the distribution of your favours.'

⚜ ⚜ ⚜

The French Secretariat was not long to function. The very chairs and tables were soon taken away for the needs of the new Commission of Government installed in the Università.

As for Royer and Doublet, they wondered what might be their fate.

It was obvious that the Grand Master was to leave the Island. Where was he to go? Where was the *Chef Lieu* to be established, from which the broken Order, still functioning in the few countries at peace with France, was to be administered and new affiliations built up? Hompesch, by the terms of the Capitulation, was promised a Principality equal to Malta.

Royer was seventy-four years of age, and had lost the whole of his property in France. Doublet was fifty years, with a wife and large family, little or no private property and an employment in the Order which was about to disappear.

'It is best,' they both agreed, 'to think of ourselves.'

But the destinies of most individuals at this moment in Malta were largely determined by the intentions of the General-in-Chief.

In doubt and anxiety as to his future, Doublet went home. It was night when he reached his house and learnt from his timid wife, who anxiously awaited her husband's return, that a French orderly had called with a letter. He had demanded a receipt for it, and his son had given one. It read :

> 'Le Général-en-Chef Bonaparte prie le citoyen Doublet
> de venir tout de suite lui parler.
> Malthe, le 24 Prairial an VI.'

Doublet hurried accordingly to the Palazzo Parisio.

Poussielgue received him, and, to Doublet's mild enquiries, stated that the General was waiting for him for two hours and was stamping with passion at the delay and would tell him himself—and probably not very agreeably—what he wanted him for.

An Unpleasant Paragraph

Bonaparte appeared in a moment with an immense bundle of papers in his hand, and the following conversation took place:

'Is it you,' he asked, 'who decode the Grand Master's cipher letters?'

'Yes, General.'

'Here, then, is one in which there is not a word of French.'

'Written to the Grand Master?'

'Yes, in what language is it? Each word makes a line and there is not an accent on the vowels, nor stops, nor commas.'

'It is an understood cipher.'

'In that case decode it for me.'

'In doing that I should fail in my duty. I have sworn to be faithful to the Grand Master, and I can only for him decipher his letters.'

'The Order and the Grand Master exist here no longer, and I relieve you from your oath.'

'I beg your pardon, General, only he can do so.'

'You make fun of me—you. There is no longer a Grand Master, I tell you. You are a Frenchman, obey, or else——' Saying this, he handed Doublet the letter, his features expressing immense anger. Doublet remembered his family and, thinking that, without being helpful to anyone, his resistance would bring misery on them, he did as he was ordered.

The letter, in fact, was the duplicate of the despatch from Rastadt, and Doublet told Bonaparte that the Grand Master had received the original six days before the arrival of his fleet.

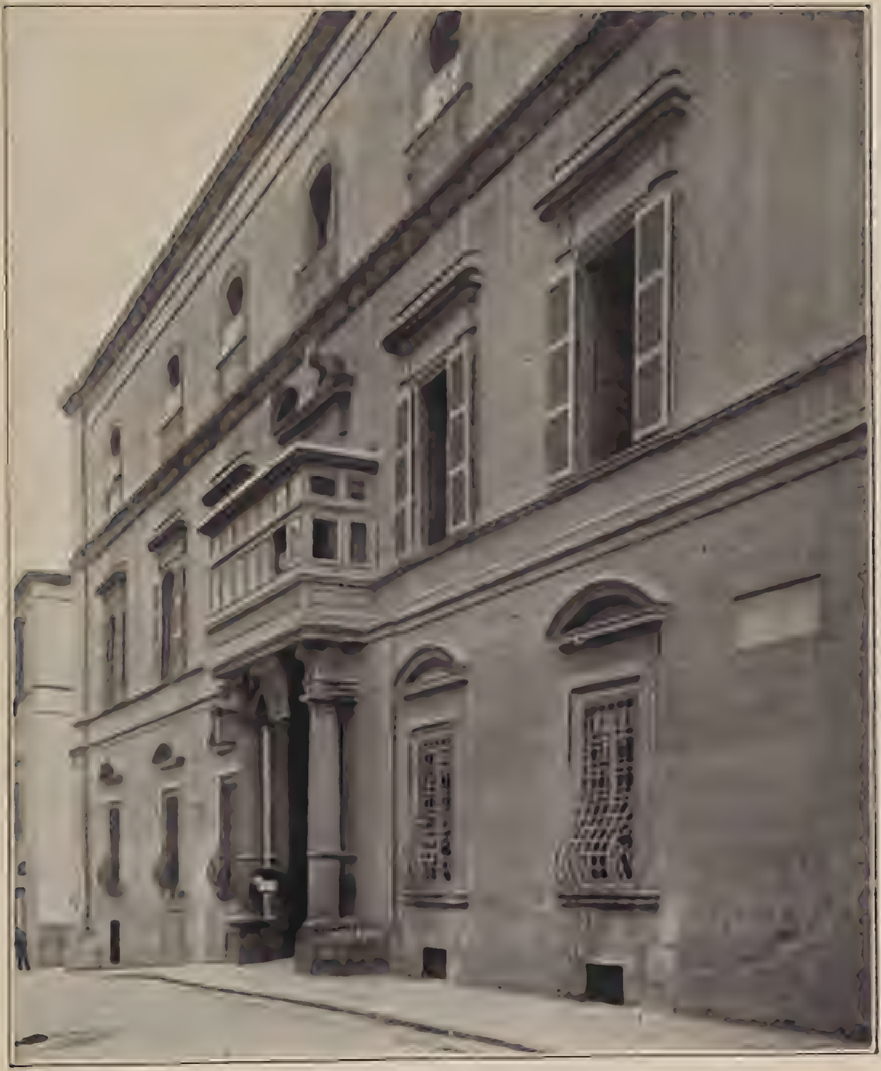
'How do you know what it is?'

'By my facility, from practice, of reading this cipher as quickly as if it was in French.'

'Let us see then.'

When Doublet read the first paragraph, Bonaparte asked what the Grand Master had done on reading this despatch. Doublet replied that the Grand Master did not believe in the report of a French attack and had, in consequence, refused to take the only steps possible to save the Order.

Bonaparte seemed interested in this last remark, for he asked what Doublet meant by that.



PALAZZO PARISIO, VALLETTA
(Now General Post Office)
Used by General Bonaparte during his stay in Malta, 13–18 June, 1798.

To face p. 324

'To order the people to block up all the wells outside the city, and then to enter it with their wives, children, old folk, treasures, beasts, and crops.

'Why did he not do this?'

'By an unreasoning mistrust . . .'

'Like his refusal of my request for water!' exclaimed Bonaparte laughing, and remarked 'the Grand Master is a clever fellow!'

'But what,' he asked, 'is the other paragraph of this despatch?'

'Something about you which will displease you.'

'Good, you think so? That doesn't matter, let's have it.'

Doublet then read the following paragraph:

'Moreover, this expedition is regarded here as a disgrace inflicted upon Bonaparte, who has two powerful enemies in the Directory who fear him, and have so arranged that he should now be removed to a distance. These members of the Directory are Rewbell and La Révellière-Lepaux.'

When Bonaparte heard the opinion that Rewbell and La Révellière-Lepaux were reported to have of him he stamped his feet and got into a violent temper. Soon he calmed himself and asked for the names of the authors of this 'impertinent piece of news'.

Doublet told him that the informant was the Secretary of the French envoys at the Congress of Rastadt. On hearing this, the fury of the General became worse than before and he left the room and sent Doublet word to report on the morrow before noon.

His action in this interview weighed on Doublet's mind and he determined to tell the Grand Master of 'the infidelity which Bonaparte had forced upon him'. Accordingly, early the next morning, having completed a full report of the events of the Capitulation, as he had been commanded to do, he presented himself at the Palace.

To his surprise, Hompesch, instead of censuring him for his seeming betrayal, blamed him for 'his imprudent resistance', and forbade, on any other occasion, any opposition to Bonaparte's wishes.

The reason for this is now apparent.

A Submissive Grand Master

The Grand Master had himself already received an official intimation to leave Malta within three days. His submissive state of mind is evidenced by a letter, dated Malta, 13 June, 1798, and signed 'Le Grand Maître, Hompesch', in which General Bonaparte is addressed as 'Citoyen General'. In the apologetic and somewhat confused terms of this letter, Hompesch explains that he had wished to hasten to express his thanks to the Citoyen General 'for the constant attentions and the infinite kindness with which he had received the many demands which he had ventured to make, that his only reason for not doing so in person was that he had determined from a feeling of delicacy not to appear in public as that might recall to the Maltese both his person and their former attachment for him'. He asked him, therefore, 'to accept in writing the expression of his sentiments, his farewell and good wishes'.

He begged the Citoyen General to fulfil his promises as to passports for the French members of the Order, and 'to this end he enclosed a general formula which, if adopted, will realize the hopes of all the Knights—his happiness lay in contributing to their peace and desires'.

He wished to quit 'at the most tranquil hour of the night', and asked accordingly that the gates of the city might be opened for him at 2 A.M. and he would go on board with the escort which the General had the intention of giving him.

He wished to devote to the payment of his debts half of the indemnity which the French Republic had given him and a charge of 100,000 francs on the pension assigned him. He therefore asked the General to order that out of this indemnity an assignment of 300,000 francs might be handed over to the Citizen Poussielgue, and a charge of 100,000 francs annually on his pension until his creditors were paid.

Hompesch's Plans

Hompesch was to be deported to Trieste. He had now to select within a short time a suitable staff—such as Bonaparte might allow—to follow him into exile.

Doublet raised the important question of his own future and prayed to be permitted to follow the Grand Master wherever he should go, 'to protect him against all the reproaches which would fall on him'. Hompesch consented gladly, provided the Secretary did not bring his wife and children with him, 'as his Household was sufficiently large already'. Doublet suggested that he could get a second ship for his family if needed. This, however, was beside the point.

Hompesch disclosed his plans: 'It was his intention on disembarking at Trieste, to set out as quickly as possible for

Vienna, and to throw himself at the feet of the Emperor. It was not so much the journey by sea in which the difficulty would arise, as that by land, and for that he wished Doublet to be unencumbered with his family.'

Doublet persisted that his first duty was to his family, whom he would not leave behind in Malta. The Grand Master, probably rather disappointed at Doublet's attitude, remarked that his Intendant, Gravagna, also had a family whom he loved, but seeing the difficulties, had agreed to leave them in Malta.

Doublet, at this, avowed his fears for Malta in a blockade by the English Fleet, with bombs, famine, and death for the unhappy civil population. He suggested, therefore, taking his family to Trieste, leaving them there, and then following Hompesch to Vienna.

Hompesch in turn saw the difficulties of this course. He would have to allow all others to bring their wives and children, and not knowing his own future lot, he could not embarrass himself with the possibility of having to provide for them.

Doublet stood firm to his determination not to leave his family behind in Malta. Hompesch concluded the interview by saying that Doublet's wife had good parents, and that Doublet himself could take time to reconsider the matter and let him know his decision.

Doublet then told all his troubles to 'his old and wise friend Royer'. He was advised to keep to his intention and was censured for opposing Bonaparte, from whom a single word could bring ruin on himself and his family.

Bonaparte wishes to be Informed

Bonaparte was in quite a good humour when on Wednesday, at noon, Doublet presented himself for his second interview. The General held in his hand several letters which he humorously said he had 'conquered' and which were 'legitimate prizes of war', though they were directed to Doublet himself!

'This is one,' he said, 'which accompanied some excellent hams and two hampers of macaroni, but they have already been eaten—otherwise, I could have given them back to you, just as I give you back this letter. My Headquarters Staff, and especially the Vice-Admiral, who is a great gourmand, regretted very much there were no more. Ask Poussielgue for the indemnity for your losses! Here now is another letter to you. It comes from Paris, and I will keep it because there is a postscript in cipher which you are going to write out for me in the margin.'

This letter, indeed, was from Cibon. It was thirty-two days old and it was concerned with numerous commissions which Doublet had asked him to undertake on behalf of many Knights at Malta who had for long lost all their income, or who were without news of their relatives in France. There was a warning, too, conjectural and belated, of the actual attack made on Malta.

The General thought there was more than this in it and did not hide his doubts that it had something concerning the 'unpleasant paragraph' in the Rastadt despatch.

Doublet, with great sangfroid, turned the incident in his favour by saying to Bonaparte:

'Monsieur Cibon is not so advanced as our correspondent at the Congress, upon the confidential operations of your Executive Directory, and while this letter is useless to you, it is very precious to me in the consolation it will bring to many of our Knights. I pray you give it to me.'

'No, parbleu, no, it is a fair capture and I shall keep it.'

Then he took from under his arm a voluminous despatch, all written in cipher-numbers, the decoding of which would have taken two or three days. Doublet told him, to reassure him, that, coming as it did from S. Petersburg, its contents would have little interest for him.

'I am not inclined,' replied Bonaparte, 'to believe you; but I think it will be a job more tiring for you than for me and so I let you off.' Saying this, he thanked Doublet and left him with Poussielgue, to whom he made a sign to follow him.

'It seems,' said Doublet to Poussielgue, 'that the memory of my hams has kept him in a good humour.'

'Ha,' he replied, 'don't be too sure—for his bantering air tells me that this comedy will have a development in which I think you will have to take a part whether you like it or not . . . in any case I shall see you again.'

With these dark words, Poussielgue departed.

Poussielgue was, as the reader may imagine, much in the counsels of Bonaparte at this moment. As the arch spy in the Malta drama it had been his business to learn what he could of the various persons who counted in the Order or amongst the Maltese. He was staying actually at the house of his cousin, the captain of the port, a servant of the Order with whom he had previously intrigued and from whom he could always obtain fresh information.

Bonaparte accordingly used him, and also the Chevalier de Bosredon Ransijat, to aid him in selecting suitable persons to fill the places in the new Maltese Government he was so rapidly forming.

The French Commissioner of Government

As Doublet left the Palazzo Parisio, with Poussielgue's cryptic words running in his head and wondering about the future of his wife and children and his own, he met the Chevalier du Pin de la Guérivière, who told him that M. Regnaud de Saint-Jean d'Angely had just been appointed by Bonaparte as the 'Commissioner of the French Government in Malta', and that he was going to pay his respects to him. The Knight explained that he had known Regnaud very well in earlier days, as they had been at school together, and that he would be pleased to present Doublet to him, if he wished.

So Doublet had the opportunity of making the acquaintance of this remarkable man, later to become a Minister of State and a Count of the Empire, and upon whom Bonaparte now relied to carry out his political plans for Malta.

He was virtually Lieutenant Governor of the Islands, for his new position gave him, subject to General Vaubois' power to overrule him, supreme and personal authority in all civil matters.

They found the Commissioner working upon a despatch to the Directory—for Bonaparte constantly informed the Government in Paris of his activities, sometimes sending several despatches in one day. It was no light task for his Headquarters Staff, for though the actual letter or report signed by Bonaparte was usually short, it had often to be accompanied by an immense number of explanatory papers. Copies of all his 'arrêtés' and orders issued to date had to be made and many other original documents copied, checked, and forwarded.

Regnaud was assisted in his task by an ex-Knight, already known to us, Paul Barras. He was to be responsible for a consignment of precious jewels worth a million écus, taken from the Treasury of the Church of S. John which, with the standards of the Order[1], he was to take to Paris. They were to be carried in the *Sensible*, a ship we have already met in the days of de Rohan.

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[1] The flags were the Great Standard of the Order, and the flags of the Regiment of Malta and of the Guards of the Grand Master, and the flag taken by General Marmont at the sortie from Valletta.

Bonaparte, with the spectacular touch which he liked, when the hard work was done, had ordered General Baraguey d'Hilliers (returning to France on sick-leave) to present the standards with ceremony to the Directory in Paris. A cannon from the arsenal, 'la pièce de 4' which merited to be presented for its workmanship, was sent as a trophy. Bonaparte included in his gifts to the Government many of the 'best views' of Malta, in contemporary engravings; a silver model of a galley of the Order, which he stated 'is that of the first galley that the Order had at Rhodes, and is a curiosity by reason of its age', and a 'surtout de table', which came from China and was wonderfully worked, 'used by the Grand Master on great occasions'.

The despatch upon which M. Regnaud was so deeply engaged when Doublet saw him, the standards and the other trophies were all lost shortly afterwards in an engagement between the *Sensible* and an English frigate, as they were thrown into the sea when the French ship sank.

When he was presented to him, Regnaud remembered Doublet perfectly and said that he had read many of his letters to Cibon at the Embassy in Paris in 1790. Doublet, rather tactlessly, expressed his regrets that his defence of the Order in the Assembly had not succeeded and was cut short with a request 'not to speak of the past, but to come and dine with him the next day, for he was very busy at the moment with the despatch'.

As Doublet hurriedly withdrew the great man recalled him. 'Do you want a post?' he asked—for he knew the way of revolutions. But Doublet assured him that he had only come to pay him his respects. . . .

Sailing Orders for Egypt

Great was Doublet's surprise on his return home to find the Citoyen Poussielgue, whom he had left with General Bonaparte at the Palazzo Parisio, waiting for him.

'I have come,' he said, 'to *order* you in the name of the General-in-Chief to accompany the army into Egypt.'

Doublet, who had long forgotten, in the rôle of confidential Secretary to a Grand Master, his early military career, could hardly think of a more unexpected transformation. The order was most unwelcome to him. 'What did they want him to do, what use would he be out there ? ' He begged Poussielgue to listen to him.

It seems that Doublet, despite his subordinate position, was always able to impress and hold his hearers—even the very highest—and against their will. Especially is this obvious when one considers the many lengthy disquisitions listened to by his superiors. His orderly mind, his sound judgement, his fund of facts and information, his correct principles, and his honesty of purpose were powerful assets. So it was on this occasion, and Bonaparte's emissary assented to Doublet's request ' to sit down and give him half an hour ', and a long and remarkable conversation took place between the two secretaries.

Doublet put forward every private reason against his going—his age, his uselessness, and even his determination to refuse to go. Poussielgue listened to him with a purpose, for it appeared that Bonaparte had been struck in the interview on the *Orient* with Doublet's powers and wished to detach him from the Order and use his abilities somewhere in the new régime.

To his objections, therefore, Poussielgue replied that ' he would be much better with them out there in Egypt, than doing nothing in Malta with his arms crossed '.

This gave Doublet an opening for a theme which he had much at heart. He told Poussielgue, doubtless to his astonishment, that he thought it was just possible they would never get to Egypt. . . . They fell into a long discussion upon foreign affairs—the position of Russia, the secret alliance of the Court of Naples with England, the danger to the French Fleet of leaving Sicily untaken, the hazards of an expanding foreign policy for France, the retaking of Malta itself. . . . Poussielgue having suggested that Doublet should place these views, which he seemed to hear with interest, before Bonaparte, returned to the purpose of his visit. He pointed out that a lucrative career might await Doublet if he followed the General. ' That does not alter matters,' Doublet replied, ' and I would ask you to give my thanks to the General for his good intentions towards me, but nothing save force will take me from my home in Malta where I wish to live and die.'

' No, ma foi,' answered Poussielgue, ' I will not undertake to carry such an answer : take it to him yourself and look out for a warm reception ; for when he wishes or orders anything he expects to be obeyed without any rejoinders ! '

It was, however, understood between them that Poussielgue would say nothing against Doublet and that Doublet should see the General himself the next morning.

A Conversation with Dolomieu

Then came another visitor that same day to Doublet, this time Dolomieu—to congratulate him upon his departure for Egypt! In this ex-Knight Doublet met an old friend and they both had many things to say and to hear. They talked for many hours.[1]

Doublet learnt much that he wanted to know, of the Revolution in France, of events leading up to the invasion of Malta and of the parts played by many fellow-members in the Order on the recent fatal Saturday when the French troops landed.

Certain incidents in the demand for the recent truce, in the selection of the delegates sent to represent the Order and the Maltese people on board the *Orient*, in the passive acceptance by the Grand Master of the Convention, and many other matters required elucidation, and Dolomieu could throw some light upon them from the French side.

Dolomieu, too, explained his own position, his curious letter to the Chevalier de Bosredon Ransijat, the honourable intentions with which he had left Toulon, and the force of circumstances which brought him into the present sad business.

He ended on a personal note, and, as an old friend, tried to remove Doublet's objections to joining the staff of Bonaparte. Their Order was no more. It was his duty to his four sons whom he had hoped to advance in the Order. Now what hopes had he or they. . . . ?

When Dolomieu rose to go, Doublet was too overcome with the personal crisis with which he was confronted and with the memories of the past which their conversation had evoked, to rise to see him out.

He was, indeed, in a dreadful dilemma between his promise to follow the Grand Master in exile and the order of Bonaparte to go to Egypt.

Honour, reason, and necessity were grappling with one another in his heart, each seeking to lead him on different courses of action.

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[1] This conversation, when read in full in Doublet's memoirs, is very interesting and will repay a fuller treatment than can be given it here.

Once more he sought the Commander Royer and ' opened his heart to him without reserve '. The Commander's ' wise impartiality, his advice, his friendly and affectionate exhortations ' confirmed Doublet in his resolution to brave the anger of Bonaparte and to refuse to leave Malta.

With a formidable interview before him on the morrow, Doublet, tired out, retired to rest.

In his third interview with Bonaparte, again in the Palazzo Parisio on Thursday, 14 June, Doublet was received by the Citoyen Beauharnais, then on duty as an aide-de-camp, at the door of the study of the General. It was the hour of the public audience and the heads of the Maltese clergy, regular and secular, had assembled that the General-in-Chief might meet them. They had been sent there by the Archbishop in compliance with Bonaparte's request.

As Doublet stood near the door, he was the first to whom Bonaparte gave audience.

' General,' he said, ' I should like to be able to follow your expedition, as you have signified to me by your private secretary, but I am fifty years old, I have a large family from whom I cannot part and some infirmities which prevent me from having this honour. I ask your permission to remain here whence I can perhaps return soon to France, my country.'

Bonaparte looked fixedly at Doublet, and smiled slightly ; then, shrugging his shoulders and without saying anything in reply, he passed on to the others.

Bonaparte Reads a Lesson

Doublet, being thus left uncertain of his fate, thought it best to wait. He had the opportunity, by so doing, of seeing how the General received the representatives of the Church. Bonaparte spoke to them all, one after another, in Italian :

' Who are you ? '

' I am the parish priest of such and such a church, or superior of such and such a convent,' the priest or cleric addressed would reply.

' Good : preach the gospel ; respect, and make respected, the constituted authority ; advise the people to submit to and obey the French Laws ; if you are a good priest I shall protect you, but if you are a bad priest I shall punish you.'

Thus the young general addressed them, in words as firm as they were laconic. The clergy seemed hostile, as was only natural, to the threats and implications of the address.

Poussielgue now appeared and to him Doublet described his encounter with Bonaparte, asking him what he could infer from the General's attitude.

'Do not be alarmed,' he replied, 'since he said nothing to you and merely smiled and shrugged his shoulders, it is a sign that he is no longer interested in your departure for Egypt, and that you are free to do what you consider best.'

Poussielgue then took Doublet into another room and told him that several of the latter's friends in Malta had expressed regret that he was not remaining with them to take part in one of the two new commissions being instituted for Maltese affairs, and that Bonaparte was agreeable to his so doing and thus providing for his future. Poussielgue asked him what office he would like and Doublet, with characteristic caution, asked time to think, adding that his long habit of working at a desk would make him prefer to have a post similar to that he had held under the Grand Master.

Such a post was to be had, Poussielgue declared, that of the Secretary General of the Commission of Government. It was after Doublet's own heart. All the other civil administrations of the new Government were subordinate to it and there would be many letters to write; many 'arrêtés' to be prepared, many deliberations to record, in a word the detail would be immense. 'You'll be overwhelmed with it all!' he concluded cynically. 'I should prefer the National Domains. The work will be very simple and the profits more lucrative.'

Poussielgue was then called away, having arranged to see Doublet at two o'clock in the afternoon.

After this conversation which decided his future, Doublet went, with very mixed feelings, to his old office in the Palace—where he had so valiantly wielded a pen for eighteen years—to collect and take away his own books, letters, and papers. Here, to his great surprise, Poussielgue again appeared. He had come with an order from Bonaparte to get all the ciphers of the Grand Master, all the decoded correspondence which was there, and especially all the despatches for Russia which, in the words of Bonaparte, 'their unexpected arrival at Malta had prevented being sent to S. Petersburg by a special courier'!

Doublet marvelled at his knowledge of the existence of these letters to the Bailli de Litta, which had not yet been sent.

Again this little man made a stand, and protested that all the documents belonged to the Grand Master. Poussielgue reminded him, tapping him on the shoulder, 'that there was no longer a Grand Master'. Doublet said he would never give them up. Poussielgue warned him that if Bonaparte should hear of this refusal he might suffer.

Doublet protested that without a positive order from the Grand Master he would *not* give them up.

Poussielgue then asked Doublet to take the demand, as from the General himself to the Grand Master, but Doublet told him to do the thing *himself*. Words passed between them as to Doublet's duty to his Prince, the politic thing and other considerations. . . .

Hompesch Prepares to Depart

Hompesch and his friends now saw clearly, as events were soon to prove, that his lot on the Continent would be a very unhappy one. Unfavourable criticisms had already been made, and would spread abroad amongst the members of the Order and their adherents, in regard to his vacillations in dealing with Bonaparte, his lack of firmness, policy, and prevision. The stories of the expelled Knights would naturally not lose anything in the telling.

It remained, then, for Hompesch on this Thursday, 14 June, to make final arrangements for his departure from Malta. He seems to have largely relied for advice in his last hours upon the Auditor Bruno.

He consulted with him as to a successor to Royer, who was too old to travel, and nominated the Commander Saint-Priest. The new secretary would have much to do, for Hompesch was now beginning to think of a manifesto to the sovereigns of Europe and of a defence of his conduct. He even thought of getting the latter printed in Malta—a last duty for Fr. Mallia—but he feared Bonaparte would never let him print and issue it.

Hompesch also concerned himself with another matter, the conservation for the Order of its Archives and its principal objects of devotion, the relics in the Church of S. John. Some of these records, such as the Papal Briefs and Charters concerning its foundation; the records of admission of the Knights still living; the minutes of the last General Chapter and of the Sacred Council itself; and the recent diplomatic correspondence, would all be required by him or his successor in any effective reconstruction of the Order in happier if distant times.

Doublet heard all this from Bruno and they agreed that the defence to be effective would have to be well done. It would not be sufficient 'to depend upon tears', but the events should be put in the light 'most favourable to the Grand Master's honour without actually putting fables in the place of facts'. He also learnt that Hompesch 'had expressed a hope that he (Doublet) would follow him into Germany, and was willing to ask for a second ship for the wives and children of his staff'.

On the afternoon of Thursday, Hompesch, therefore, received Doublet and asked him 'had he yet decided to share his lot?' He told him of the appointment of Saint-Priest and added that this Knight had a great regard for Doublet's wisdom and was willing to follow his methods of administration. Would Doublet come as his second secretary? He would like him, indeed, to be first secretary, but explained that there were difficulties. . . .

Hompesch explained to Doublet that it was on the suggestion of Bruno, and following his advice, that he had withheld the Capitulation from the Sacred Council for either rejection or ratification. He had thoroughly agreed with Bruno's reasons for this line of action.

As regards the Grand Master's defence, Doublet urged the immediate publication of an '*exposé rapide et sincère*' of his conduct and the terms of the Capitulation. At the same time, he suggested—with the subtlety of a diplomatist of the old school—that Hompesch should write a personal and confidential letter to all the Grand Priors of the Order abroad, and to their Ministers at the Courts of friendly Powers, telling the real reasons of prudence which actuated him in following Bruno's advice.

As to the new secretary, however, Doublet told Hompesch that he would never consent to be subordinate to the Commander Saint-Priest. He had an 'unsurmountable antipathy' to him. He considered him as a Knight unfitted for the new duties, as he had no knowledge of foreign politics; and he disliked him personally by reason of his reputation which, he declared, was none of the best. When the Grand Master had promoted him to be his 'aide-de-camp general', everybody blamed him for doing so. He alleged that long before the present disaster, Saint-Priest ever sought to supplant Royer, to whom actually he was under many obligations. Doublet, however, suggested a compromise. If there was a difficulty about appointing a person *not* a fully professed Knight to the first place, let Saint-Priest be appointed to the office with its emoluments, just as de Rohan had done in the case of Royer, but ‘ forbid him to write a line, in either white or black, of the defence or of any other important document ’.

The Grand Master agreed ‘ to consult Bruno ’ on this proposal, and Doublet withdrew from the presence. He does not seem, however, to have told the Grand Master anything about his last interview with Poussielgue, in which his possible appointment to the new Commission of Government had been mentioned.

‘*Citoyen Doublet*’

As Doublet left the Palace, seeking his home, the concierge of the Università ran after him, shouting to him to stop.

‘ They have been waiting for you for two hours,’ he cried, ‘ the whole Commission is assembled.’

‘ Where ? ’

‘ In the hall of the Università. There’s the Chevalier de Ransijat, the Commissioner of the French Government ! ’

‘ What do they want with me ? ’

‘ You are made, I think, secretary. . . . But come quickly or they’ll sack me, and I don’t want to lose my job.’

It was quite true. Doublet’s doubts and difficulties were over. The actual minutes of the first meeting of the new Commission of Government confirm, in this respect, the accuracy of his narrative. From them, too, we can see the comprehensive and effective methods employed by Bonaparte.

It appears that the newly appointed members of the Commissions had been assembled that morning in the great hall of the ‘ ci-devant ’ Auberge de France. General Berthier had read to them in the presence of Regnaud de S. Jean d’Angely the two orders of the General-in-Chief, of which copies were duly exhibited, instituting the new form of Government. He had then administered to the members the oath of fidelity to the Republic and ‘ proclaimed them charged as from that day with the government of Malta ’.

There had also been summoned to witness this ceremony and to learn who were to be their new rulers and what their powers, the principal officials of the old régime, the judges, the officers of the police and of the departments of State, the heads of the learned professions and other leading citizens. The parish priests and heads of the religious communities were also summoned.

To all these persons, in their turn, General Berthier administered the oath of fidelity to the Republic.

These proceedings had then terminated and the Commission of Government had reassembled the same afternoon at the Università.

Its first business was to choose a President to act for the first six months, and the 'citoyen Bosredon Ransijat' (as he was now called, without the offending 'particule' and title of Chevalier) was unanimously elected.

Then they proceeded to the selection of a Secretary General to the Commission 'and the Citoyen Ovide Doublet was elected unanimously'. They next turned to the selection of ten Maltese gentlemen to form the Municipalities of the new 'City of Malta', for Valletta, as a separate city, was to be known no more. At this stage, the minutes tell us, 'the citoyen Doublet' entered—heralded as we have seen by the porter of the Università.

Doublet has told us the feelings of distress of mind and of body with which, in these circumstances, he joined his new colleagues. 'The extreme heat of the June night, the number of lights burning, the confined space of a round table about which were seated twelve or fifteen people, many of whom he did not know, though they were natives of the place, created a feeling of oppression.' A scene followed which the official minutes, naturally, do not record.

Doublet, on entering, was formally addressed by the President, Bosredon Ransijat, who informed him that they had appointed him their Secretary General and tendered to him the oath of fidelity to the laws of the Republic. Doublet attempted to refuse to take it, saying something about his not being very familiar with the laws of the Republic nor with the functions of the proposed office, when he was interrupted by a voice which, he tells us, thundered at him: 'What, citizen, you are a Frenchman and you dare to refuse to serve the Republic!'

The speaker was the Civil Commissioner Regnaud Saint-Jean d'Angely himself, whom Doublet on entering had not recognized, as he had been writing at the table with his back turned towards the door.

As to the laws, the Commissioner continued, the members knew no more than he did, and that did not prevent them accepting nomination and taking the oath. As to his ignorance of the official duties, he had not conducted a department of State for so many years, for nothing, and he would receive all the necessary initial help. Regnaud Saint-Jean d'Angely then called on him to take the oath, the words of which the President Bosredon Ransijat pronounced and Doublet repeated. The President then embraced him, as did also the Commissioner.

'At this point'—so reads the official entry—'Citizen La Correterie, secretary to Saint-Jean d'Angely, who had acted provisionally as secretary to the Commission of Government, signed and handed the register to the Citizen Doublet.'

The hall in the Università where they met was too small and the President proposed that they should occupy for the future the hall of the Venerable Chamber of the Treasury—so long the scene of the Chevalier de Bosredon Ransijat's activities in the service of the Order. To this the Commissioner agreed. It was arranged that the Commission should meet each day at eleven o'clock, except Sundays and holidays.

Before they concluded this first evening's séance, the Commissioner asked the President, the ex-Baron Dorell and Doublet to meet the next morning, at the early hour of seven o'clock, at the quarters of General Sucy, the chief ordnance officer, and to bring with them maps of the Islands of Malta and Gozo for the purpose of dividing the Country into fourteen Municipalities.

The meeting then adjourned, the hour was late and everyone went home.

* * *

Thus ended for Doublet a most extraordinary day, 'so strange', he tells us, 'that it seemed a dream'. Here he was, by an unexpected train of events 'precluded absolutely and for ever from rendering any service to the Grand Master, who, in revenge, could employ to his heart's content the rare talents of the Commandeur Saint-Priest!' Doublet's honour, however, required him 'to assure the Prince that he had not willingly taken office in the new Commission', and he thought he could best do so through the Auditor Bruno. That night, therefore, he wrote a letter to the Auditor in which he recorded his interview earlier in the day with the Grand Master and the advice he had tendered the Prince in the matter of the proposed 'defence'. He explained that he was really no longer master of his movements, but that he was ready to devote the few hours in which he might be free to help the Prince to settle his affairs 'with all that zeal and devotion which he had ever shown him'.

The Grand Master no longer counts

Few people in Malta were by this time actively concerned in the doings of the unhappy Hompesch still keeping in the seclusion of the Palace.

The Grand Master no longer counted, and General Bonaparte felt he could leave Malta safe for French interests.

On the next day, Friday, 15 June, it was publicly announced that General Vaubois would fill the post of Commandant of Malta, the Commissioner d'Angely and the Civil Commission of Government to act under him. It is to be noted that in this position of supreme authority Vaubois was expressly precluded from delegating his authority to any of his generals, but was required to exercise it *personally* in relation to d'Angely and the Civil Commission of Government.

The mood of most sections of the community in Malta was now to accept the new dispensation and make the best of it. There were many factors which gave the new Government a fair promise of success. What they did and what they attempted to do in the next two years, and why the French occupation failed to influence the social and political condition of the Maltese people usefully and appreciably in any way that counts to-day, as it well might have done, cannot here be considered.

Despite their inconsistencies, their injustices and their military ends, the manifestos of Bonaparte to the Maltese people and the acts for which he was responsible, were often liberal and inspiring. The freedom of the Press was established and, in theory at least, freedom of speech. A French officer, aided by an interpreter, was sent the round of the prisons to liberate all prisoners detained for their opinions and the aged Don Gaetano Mannarino emerged, having been incarcerated since 1775, to find himself a national hero and the name of Strada Reale, in his old parish of Floriana, changed by the French into 'Via Mannarino'.

The complete physical mastery of Malta by Bonaparte, and his wholesale deportations of the hostile Knights and of other persons opposed to a national and democratic government, decided the waverers and gave strength to the patriots amongst the Maltese who were willing to accept a constitutional government under the French Republic, as an instalment of that freedom promised to small nations.

Now that the Order was gone, alien aristocrats were no longer their governors, and the Maltese themselves were actually in a majority on the new Commission of Government; Vincent Barbara and his fellow-conspirators might be satisfied with their achievement and might even think—for patriotic impulses know no bounds—of the restoration of the *Consiglio Popolare*. . . .

The old Knights over sixty years, who wished to do so, were allowed to remain in Malta. The 'die-hards' among them still dreamt of a counter-revolution and hoped for the destruction of Bonaparte and his Fleet in Egypt, but they were a negligible force.

Few people in the Islands, at this time, would have wished the Knights to remain their rulers, with all the privileges of the *ancien régime*.

Settling Down

So General Vaubois was able to write in the next month of July to the General-in-Chief in Egypt that 'the inhabitants are settling down and are beginning to see how our invasion will be to their advantage. Some of the country folk are persuaded that the lands of the Knights will be divided amongst them and have already gone into and taken those adjoining their fields. . . . They did not like to see even the smallest positions held by "ci-devant" chevaliers. The people are gentle and kind, and there are no plots'.

Of their new Governor, Bonaparte had written in a despatch of 18 June, to the Directory at Paris:

'I have left in command of the Island the General of Division, Vaubois; it is he who directed the landing and conciliated the inhabitants by his wisdom and his kindness.'

This opinion was confirmed by the President Bosredon Ransijat in a letter to Bonaparte of 14 July, in which he writes:

> 'As for Vaubois, the Maltese are enchanted by his affability and kind-heartedness. His conduct gains all hearts for him and the Commission of Government above all praise him, for he always devotes himself with zeal to anything which may facilitate their undertakings.'

Doublet tells, too, how on Friday, 14 June, when they had settled the fourteen new Municipalities of Malta, representatives of the Commission of Government waited upon General Vaubois, whose new position was announced that day, to pay their respects to him. The interview passed off, he remarks somewhat cynically, 'in nice words and in reciprocal protestations of the pleasure which they all would have in working together for the common good of the public administration'.

The Chevalier de Bosredon Ransijat seems to have taken Doublet into his confidence and to have made clear to him much that was hidden from many during the invasion and the Capitulation.

Last Glimpses of the Grand Master

Hompesch duly learnt of Doublet's apparent desertion. He was angry, so Bruno told Doublet, that he had been forced to take this new post. He could not, he said, withdraw his confidence from Saint-Priest, who accordingly would prepare the defence, but he had abandoned the idea of publishing it in Malta.

Hompesch, however, had still two matters in which he wanted Doublet's assistance, and he sent for him on the Friday to come to the Palace.

He wished him to select for Saint-Priest 'the best of all his clerks'. Doublet recommended a M. Melan,[1] a Marseillais, '*myope*, and the possessor of a not too-brilliant handwriting, though with a mastery of words'. He was well educated and knew Latin, but whether he could draft a despatch or prepare '*un mémoire circonstancié*', he did not know, as he had been employed only upon the registration of correspondence. So this matter was settled.

Hompesch must also obtain permission from Bonaparte to carry with him certain records from the Archives of the Order. He wished also to retrieve the Russian letters and other correspondence which Poussielgue had taken away and asked Doublet to get them from him. Doublet mildly protested that this would seem to be the duty of Saint-Priest, but to assist the Grand Master, he consented to draft a letter.

The corrections of this timid Prince, which took an hour, writes Doublet, reduced the letter to a humble supplication of the vanquished asking for a favour, rather than the demand of a Prince founded on public right. Doublet tore up the corrected draft in disgust, to prevent the preservation of a copy of so humiliating a document. General Bonaparte, in fact, made no reply to it, but Hompesch was allowed to carry off from the Palace the silver and plate, furniture, linen, and the contents of the larder, and all the wines he wanted. Seventy-eight great boxes were filled. These were exempted from the inspection of foreign 'douanes' by being marked with the signature of a French Customs officer named *Bonhomme*, and were put on board the boat by which the Prince was to travel in two days.

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[1] Possibly the same who carried the letter from the Grand Master, asking for a truce, to the *Orient*.

On Saturday, 16 June, Doublet did not see the Grand Master, being busy with the work of the Commission to which he applied himself with the application we might expect. The detail was proving, as Poussielgue foretold, immense, and he worked upon it, he tells us, often sixteen hours a day.

Doublet, however, was able to complete on this day the remarkable letter to the Bailli de Virieu, in exile at Lausanne, to which we have alluded. Its last paragraph is interesting to us, because in it the writer mentioned that he was enclosing a copy of the Report he presented to the Grand Master on all that happened at the truce and at the Capitulation, and he asked de Virieu to make known the contents of it to members of the Order with whom he was still in touch. He sent this letter by the Chevalier de Seytres-Caumont, the former Chargé d'Affaires of the King of France at Malta, who was being deported to Italy, whence he undertook to send it into Switzerland by a 'safe courrier'.

The Chevalier Seytres-Caumont was willing to carry this somewhat dangerous missive, in return for a service which Doublet had rendered him. It appears that some time after the death of Louis XVI, and when Seytres-Caumont could represent France no longer, he had placed his official correspondence with the Princes of the Blood, during their emigration, for safety in Doublet's office in the Palace. Doublet now, before Hompesch's departure, and while he still retained the keys of the French Secretariat, gave Seytres-Caumont these letters which he desired to take away with him. What became of Doublet's Report? What became of the letters of the Princes?

* * *

On the day of his departure, Sunday, 17 June, Hompesch sent for Doublet at a little before noon. As Doublet was busy at a sitting of the Commission, a half-hour elapsed before he could comply with the desire of His Eminence.

'As soon as I arrived at the Palace,' he writes, 'the Grand Chamberlain, Ligondez, told me that the Grand Master was at table. He said he had some people with him in his quarters and asked me to come and dine with them, to avoid the trouble of returning. I consented, but I could eat nothing. Towards one o'clock he conducted me to the apartments of His Eminence. While going there I asked this Knight if he knew what the Prince wanted with me. He told me he did not know. I wished him "bon voyage" (for he was sailing with the Grand Master), and he left me.

'As soon as the Grand Master perceived me he was so deeply affected, even to tears, that in spite of all my sympathetic efforts to calm him, I could get nothing from him but broken words of regret that I was not following him and that he had not had more faith in my counsels since the day of the despatch from Rastadt. Not being able to calm him, I sought if I could, by entering into his mind, arrive at knowing the motive that he had in sending for me.

'While I was making this attempt the Commissioner of the French Government was announced. He entered the room without waiting for an answer from His Eminence in such a way that this Prince had no choice but to receive him, and he took him into an inner room, without making any sign to me to remain. As tears had come to my eyes also, Regnaud Saint-Jean d'Angely, who perceived them, said, in passing close to me: "Farewells are painful, it seems". I answered "Nothing is more natural", but he probably did not hear me.

'I went out and wanted to tell the Chevalier Ligondez of the state of uncertainty in which the Grand Master had left me and to explain that I was obliged to go back to attend to the business of my office, but I could not find him. Affairs tied me for the rest of the day to my desk at the Commission, and it became impossible for me to return to the Palace and, consequently, to see the Grand Master again or any members of his suite.'

* * *

On the next day it was learnt in Valletta that Hompesch and his staff had, with a favourable wind, departed two hours after midnight, and that during a secret visit which he had made to Bonaparte to plead for better terms, this Prince had the inconceivable feebleness to throw off the magistral toga which, as Grand Master, he usually wore, and to wear instead a hat adorned with the tricolour. This hat belonged to the President Bosredon Ransijat of the Commission of Government who alone seemed capable of having counselled such a base extravagance. Plunged into mourning and torpor, this unhappy Prince did not perceive the degradation of his action.

Hompesch took away with him from S. John's Church the three principal objects of devotion: the right hand of their Patron S. John, the miraculous image of Our Lady of Philermo, and a relic of the True Cross. They were despoiled, however, of their rich mountings.

With him sailed but a few unknown members of the Order—amongst them the Commanders Ligondez, de Saint-Priest and Miari, the Chevaliers Des Brull and de Saulx Tavannes, a page, M. de Roquefeuil and two servants d'armes, MM. le Normand and de Becker. A French frigate escorted them part of the way on the journey to Trieste, which was reached in thirty-five days.

⚜ ⚜ ⚜

From Trieste, Hompesch wrote a letter[1] to the Emperor of Austria asking an 'asylum for his Order and for his person after the catastrophe of Malta'; and shortly afterwards issued a protest to the Sovereigns of Europe against the loss of his principality, both of which appeals fell upon unheeding ears.

Within a month, the Grand Master was deposed by certain members of the Order who had gathered in S. Petersburg. These schismatic Knights issued from there, on 26 August, 1798, a Manifesto in which they 'protested against the ancient and noble theatre of our glory being traitorously sold by a convention null in its principle as it is infamous in its results'. The Emperor Paul I was in due course elected by them as their new Grand Master.

After many wanderings and vicissitudes, Ferdinand Hompesch, with a dwindling band of faithful followers, reached Montpellier, where he was allowed to reside with the title of 'His Excellency' and a fragment of the pension promised by General Bonaparte, now become the Emperor Napoleon. He died there, in comparative poverty, in the year 1805.

⚜ ⚜ ⚜

On 16 June, General Bonaparte wrote to the Directory: 'the Fleet commences to leave the Port and by the 18th inst. we count on being in full sail for our destination', and in another despatch of the same day enclosing copies of the various orders he had given, he wrote: 'I have forgotten nothing which could assure us this Isle. . . . Nothing equals the importance of this place.'

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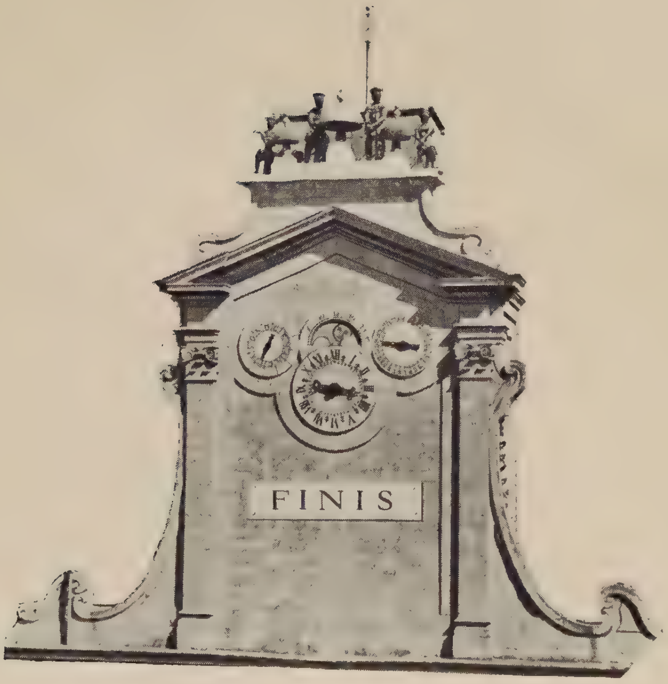
[1] Written, apparently, July 6, when still at sea.

When he sailed for the East, Bonaparte took with him the ornamental dagger which was presented to the Grand Master La Vallette by Pope Pius IV for his defence of Malta in the Great Siege and which that Grand Master afterwards reproduced as his own crest. Bonaparte carried this dagger frequently on his person, it is said, and kept it to his death. In his will the Emperor bequeathed it—described as 'mon poignard'—to his son, the Duc de Reichstadt. It may be seen to-day in the Gallery of Apollo in the Louvre.

Thus the far-reaching influences of the French Revolution at length destroyed the sovereignty of the Order of the Knights of Malta; but the prevailing genius of its aftermath, Napoleon Bonaparte, realised the vast importance of their small Island Kingdom and the part which it might play in world affairs.



CLOCK IN PALACE, VALLETTA, WITH EFFIGIES OF SLAVES STRIKING THE HOURS

To face p. 346 at end

APPENDIX

SHORT LIST OF AUTHORITIES AND OF ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS AND RECORDS CONSULTED

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926	'Gli spropriamenti di G. M. de Rohan': Will of Grand Master.
1099	'Conti per morte di de Rohan.'
923	'Libro Debitori verso il fù Em̄o de Rohan, 11 Giugno, 1797.'
1530–39	Register and Précis of letters written by the Grand Master.
1576–86	Letters in French of the Grand Master.
1239–43	Letters to the Grand Master, 1775–1782.
1365–73	Letters to the Grand Master from Ambassadors, 1775–1790.
1672	Original letters of the Grand Master to the Bailli de Suffren.

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309	Chapter General, 1776.
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5232–53	‘Processi delle prove dei Capellani d' Ubbedienza e Donati.’
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1612–13	do. do. to the Grand Prior of Toulouse, 1731–1792.
1615–16	Letters from the Treasury of Malta to the Grand Prior of France, 1783–1791

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[1] Not examined. F. W. R.

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